CHANGE IS THE BASIS OF ALL HISTORY, THE PROOF OF VIGOR. THE OLD IS SOILED AND DISGUSTING BY NATURE. STALE FOOD IS REPELLENT, MONOGAMOUS LOVE BREEDS CONTEMPT, SENILITY CRIPPLES THE GOVERNMENT THAT IS TOO POWERFUL TOO LONG. UPHEAVAL IS DESIRABLE BECAUSE FRESH, UNTAINTED GROUPS SEIZE OPPORTUNITY. VIOLENT OVERTHROW IS APPROPRIATE WHEN THE SITUATION IS INTOLERABLE. SLOW MODIFICATION CAN BE EFFECTIVE; MEN CHANGE BEFORE THEY NOTICE AND RESIST. THE DECADENT AND THE POWERFUL CHAMPION CONTINUITY. "NOTHING ESSENTIAL CHANGES." THAT IS A MYTH. IT WILL BE REFUTED. THE NECESSARY BIRTH CONVULSIONS WILL BE TRIGGERED. ACTION WILL BRING THE EVIDENCE TO YOUR DOORSTEP.

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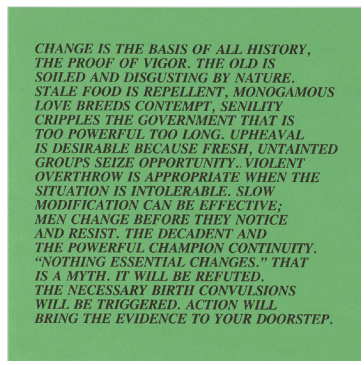
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(cover)
adapted from:
Jenny Holzer
American, b. 1950 (RISD MFA 1977, Painting)
Untitled
From the series *Inflammatory Essays*, 1979–1982
Offset lithography on green paper
25.4 × 25.4 cm. (10 × 10 in.)
Museum Acquisition Fund 2003.11.1
© 2019 Jenny Holzer, member Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

(page 2)
Shimon Attie
American, b. 1957
Almstadtstrasse 5 (formerly Gendaierstrasse 24): Former Jewish residence and hat shop, ca. 1930, 1993
Color chromogenic print
Image: 44.9 × 54.9 cm. (17 1⁄16 × 21 5⁄8 in.)
Mary B. Jackson Fund 2001.5
© 2019 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn

(page 3)
Andre Bradley
American, b. 1987 (RISD MFA 2015, Photography)
I Learned About Race Today, 2015
Xerox print, wood panels, and latex paint
45.7 × 121.9 cm. (18 × 48 in.)
Georgianna Sayles Aldrich Fund
© Andre Bradley

(above)
Korean
Mirror with Dragons, 300–600 CE
Bronze
Diam.: 22.2 cm. (8 13⁄16 in.)
Museum Appropriation Fund 18.304

Anita N. Bateman is a PhD candidate at Duke University in the Art, Art History, and Visual Studies Department, as well as the Andrew W. Curatorial Fellow in the Prints, Drawings, and Photographs Department at the RISD Museum.

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Elon Cook Lee is the program director and curator at the Center for Reconciliation, a consultant specialized in interpreting slavery and race at cultural-heritage sites around the country, and a teacher at RISD of courses on slavery and race in the context of the United States.

Becci Davis, 2018 RISD Museum Artist Fellow, works across disciplines. She finds inspiration in her experiences as a daughter, mother, Southerner, and descendant both of enslaved Americans and their exploiters.

Jessica Deane Rosner primarily works on paper with ink, gouache, and marker to create labor-intensive, intricate drawings. She strives for control while allowing mistakes and accidents to remain visible. Her work often incorporates text.

Jamie Gabbarelli is the assistant curator of prints, drawings, and photographs at the RISD Museum. He specializes in prints and drawings made before 1900.

Ronnie Goodman is a self-taught homeless artist and distance runner living in San Francisco. He is inspired by the beauty of the city and its diversity, balanced with the struggles of human despair.

Bethany Johns is a graphic designer, professor, and the RISD Graphic Design graduate program director. She recently participated in the Cooper Union exhibition *WE DISSENT. . . Design of the Women's Movement in New York*.

Kevin McBride is an associate professor of anthropology at the University of Connecticut. His research interests include the ethnohistory of Native peoples in New England and seventeenth-century Colonial-Indigenous conflicts.

Walker Mettling is a cartoonist, tempeh maker, poster artist, and the 2017 RISD Museum Artist Fellow. He runs the Providence Comics Consortium, a comics micro-publisher of kid and adult artists.

Nell Painter (the painter formerly known as the historian Nell Irvin Painter, Edwards Professor of American History [emerita], Princeton University; author of *The History of White People* and *Old in Art School: A Memoir of Starting Over*; and holder of an MFA in painting from RISD) lives and works in Newark, New Jersey.

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Suzanne M. Scanlan, a lecturer in the Theory and History of Art and Design Department at RISD, recently authored *Divine and Demonic Imagery at Tor de'Specchi, 1400–1500: Religious Women and Art in 15th-Century Rome* (Amsterdam University Press, 2018).

Lorén M. Spears (Narragansett / Niantic) is the executive director of the Tomaquag Museum, Rhode Island's only indigenous museum. She works to empower Native youth and educate the public on Native history, culture, arts, and the environment.

Shiyanthi Thavapalan is a postdoctoral research associate in Assyriology at Brown University. She writes about the history of technologies and the circulation of craft knowledge in ancient Mesopotamia.

Nick White is the author of two books of fiction: *Sweet and Low*, a collection of stories, and *How to Survive a Summer*, a novel. A native of Mississippi, he lives in Columbus, Ohio, where he teaches creative writing at Ohio State.

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Columns

From the Files pries open the archive, Double Take looks at one object two different ways, Artist on Art offers a creative response by an invited artist, Object Lesson exposes the stories behind objects, Portfolio presents a series of objects on a theme, How To explores the making of an object

Hidden Histories

Nell Painter

Some years ago I said history exists in two time frames, the past and the present.[1] Though it's tempting to conclude that what happened in the past is over and done with, historical narrative changes over time. It's good to remember this with regard to art history and museums, where the very physicality of what's on exhibit would seem to endow objects with the solidity of permanence, especially objects of unquestioned aesthetic value whose provenance is secure and whose wall labels are complete.

I'm thinking of the works I can see in the wall calendar beside my desk that features the paintings of the early twentieth-century Group of Seven, originators of a distinctly Canadian national school of painting analogous to the Hudson River School in U.S.-American art history. The Group of Seven inspires not only my calendar, but also my husband's jigsaw puzzles. Is there anything of consequence still hidden in the history of the Group of Seven?

Art history, like history-history, changes to uncover the narratives of untitled items of apparel; portraits of unknown sitters in familiar and exotic clothing, painted by unknown artists; drawings that have been erased; esoteric and outmoded artistic processes that cannot be understood; text pieces in unfamiliar languages. In newly inclusive national narratives, objects that formerly could hardly be found in museum collections now appear as worth keeping, even as worth exhibiting. These objects may come to the museum with their histories hidden, but assiduous research may fill in some gaps. We may learn who made what and how it came to the museum. That's the easy part of unhiding histories. Established art historians and curators know how to do that.

The harder part, at least the easier part of the harder part, has already been done once the criteria established by art historians and curators have broadened to accept a portrait of an unknown black man as deserving to be seen, even if the painter's identity is not known. The easier part of the harder part has already been accomplished when everyday objects like mittens and moccasins made by unknown Native American women can be prized as art. That easier part is the act of seeing anew, of recognizing art in objects previously disregarded.

Even though I'm calling this an easier part of the harder part, the recognizing doesn't come easily and has taken a long time—too much time. An instance on my mind comes from Canada, where fine art by Anishinaabe people long remained hidden, even the work of Norval Morrisseau (1931–2007), Thunder Bay's "Picasso of the North" and the leader of the Indian Group of Seven. Canadian museums finally exhibited Morrisseau's work in the 1970s and 1980s, and in 2006, the National Gallery of Canada mounted a retrospective of his work. This twenty-first-century exhibition marked the museum's first solo exposition of the work of any First Nations artist. Yet there are still harder parts in ongoing process of reseeing art already in museums.

When the president of France and Brown University faculty and students demand that plundered objects be returned to their countries of origin, those demands are part of this harder part for institutions such the RISD Museum, for negotiating with museum counterparts in countries of origin challenges American and European museums. The return of plundered art demands a recognition of peer institutions led by people of color in formerly colonized nations—a learning exercise that may come as hard as the querying of canonical works.

When art historian Denise Murrell began investigating Laure, the black model in Édouard Manet's *Olympia*, she tackled a harder part of the hard part of hidden histories. She interrogated a figure hidden in plain sight who had received less art-historical commentary than the cat in the painting. Despite roadblocks, Murrell curated the Columbia University exhibition *Posing Modernity: The Black Model from Manet and Matisse to Today* based on her dissertation. She overcame the art world's reluctance to dismantle established norms, especially those working against people of color.

The work of dismantling has its own history going back to institutional critique of the 1960s. In *Mining the Museum: An Installation Confronting History* (1992–1993) the artist Fred Wilson curated the collection of the Maryland Historical Society to show how the organization's practice flattered white elites and buried the existence of Native and African people of color.

I recently encountered institutional critique in action alongside a painting by Lawren S. Harris (1885–1970) exhibited in the Art Gallery of Ontario in

Toronto. Harris anchors the Group of Seven; he even has calendars of his very own. Harris painted Canada in dramatically lit landscapes, especially favoring Lake Superior's and Norval Morrisseau's Thunder Bay. For decades, Harris and the Group of Seven visualized unquestioning Canadian self-regard.

But no longer. In a wall label printed in three languages—Anishinaabemowin, French, and English—beside a Harris painting, the museum critiques the hallowed Group of Seven:

> Harris portrayed the Canadian landscape as vast and unpopulated vistas, which he viewed as "a source of spiritual flow." However these locations had been home to Indigenous Peoples since time immemorial and fur-trading settlers since the 1600s. Harris's visions of Canada helped reinforce colonial narratives of the country as an expansive and untouched terrain.

The Art Gallery of Ontario indicts settler-oriented fine art in general. At the same time, we know that recognition of the art of First Nations painters came slowly, only after Canadian museums questioned the Eurocentric aesthetic and saw anew. New eyes are necessary for reseeing, for museum history shows that challenging established curatorial traditions is too hard—the hardest part of what's hard—without new sets of eyes.

Diversifying museum staffs is crucial to the processes of looking, writing, and curating in the spirit of openness. In this work against unknowing and hiding, Canadian art history still has a ways to go, as does U.S.-American art history, for so many objects and histories remain hidden, and canonical objects continue to evade institutional critique.

1 *Creating Black Americans: African American History and Its Meanings, 1619 to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

Labrador Moccasins

Laurie Anne Brewer

Spring/Summer 2019

Manual

Associated with this pair of delicately worked moccasins in the RISD Museum collection is a three-by-five-inch index card rich with intriguing information: "Labrador. Grenfell Mission." What was the Grenfell Mission? Turning the card: "From N.E. Grenfell Assoc., 25 Huntington Ave. Boston, Mass."

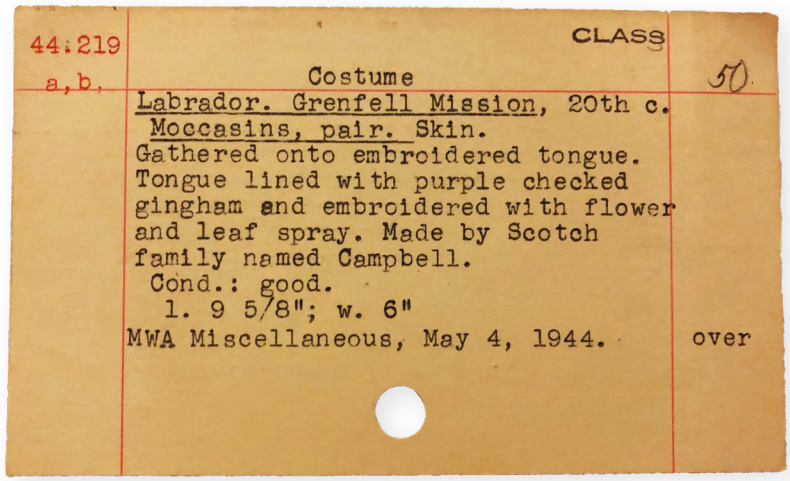
A Christian charity organization, the Grenfell Mission became Dr. Wilfred T. Grenfell's (1865–1940) life's work, where he sought to provide medical care to impoverished communities along Canada's isolated Atlantic coast. Grenfell opened the first hospital in 1893 in Battle Harbour, Labrador, and by 1913 established the International Grenfell Association, still in existence today. "A charismatic individual and a gifted speaker, he soon became very successful at spreading the word of his work on the coast and at influencing the rich and powerful in the eastern United States, especially Boston and New York, Canada and England, to raise funds to support his mission."[1]

By creating cooperative stores near the medical stations, Grenfell sought to "help the settlers to escape the 'truck system' of trade, and the consequent loss of independence and thrift."[2] At these stores, First Nations community members as well as those of European descent marketed items ranging from knitted objects and hooked rugs to Indigenous arts. It appears that the RISD Museum moccasins were traded at one of these Grenfell cooperative stores. But who made them? Returning to the index card, it further elaborates: "Made by Scotch family named Campbell."[3]

During the nineteenth century, Newfoundland and Labrador experienced several waves of immigration by Scottish families, at times centered around the fishing industry and at other periods in relation to work with the Hudson's Bay Company. Immigrant groups from Scotland varied by the region they were leaving, the Highlands or Lowlands, further influencing whether they arrived in Canada as impoverished or middle class. The 1857 census recorded some 416 Scottish-born people living in Labrador, and the 1945 Labrador census lists six families named Campbell.

While these moccasins do not immediately speak to Scottish fashions, subtle clues hint at differences between this pair and typical Innu craftsmanship. In two-piece moccasins of the Innu Nation regions, the upper, or apron, usually resolves in a curved dorsal portion or a full cuff.[4] The RISD Museum moccasins, whose size suggests they were intended for an adult, present elements of Innu and to some extent Wabenaki styles in the straight cut across the apron at the top of the foot, but they also share a kinship with European

Origin:	Attributed to a member of the Campbell family ("Scotch"), Labrador, Canada; in Innu (Labrador), Naskapi, or Naskapi Innu (formerly Naskapi-Montagnais) style
	Traded at the Grenfell Mission, Labrador, Canada
	Purchased from the N. E. Grenfell Association office, Boston, Massachusetts, May 4, 1944, for $1.15
Object:	Moccasins, ca. 1900–1940
Materials:	Tanned and smoked hide, sinew, silk embroidery, cotton lining
Height:	At toe: 24.8 x 8.3 cm. (9 3/4 x 3 1/4 in.); width at heel: 10.2 cm. (4 in.)
Acquisition:	MWA Miscellaneous 44.219ab



loafer-style footwear. The adoption of Indigenous styles by settler colonizers, while sometimes driven by lack of access to imported European goods, was also fostered by practicality. "Some settlers continued to wear moccasins informally for comfort, and for practical purposes in the wilderness. Even well into the 19th century, they would wear moccasins . . . where these types of footwear provided better protection against the elements."[5] Here a host of diminutive pleats is brought together at the toe—no easy feat when working with even the supplest of hides. On the sole, substantial wear is present. A ghostly impression of a foot emerges from the stained hide.

Another consideration is the embroidery. Precise floral needlework is a tradition long carried out both in Indigenous and settler communities, but with differences in materials and motifs. Costly imported silk-floss embroidery thread is employed here, a material introduced to First Nations craftswomen via the fur trade and in mission schools, often supplanting the use of porcupine quills or moose hair. Were the moccasins made by an immigrant to Labrador—a Scot—adopting Innu techniques? Or by an Innu woman, perhaps with a Scottish surname due to marriage or parentage, or further still due to forced renaming of First Nations children at residential schools?

The intersection of immigrant and Indigenous cultures at the Grenfell Mission and associated orphanages and Indian residential schools manifested in potent exchanges. These modest moccasins speak to larger and often painful stories that continue to unfold as North American history is explored via material culture.[6]

1 "Our History: Over a Century of Giving," International Greenfell Association, accessed January 8, 2019, http://www.grenfellassociation.org/who-we-are/history/.

2 Wilfred Thomason Grenfell, *Labrador: The Country and the People* (New York: Macmillan, 1970), 240.

3 See "Scottish in NL," Newfoundland and Labrador Heritage Web Site, accessed January 8, 2019, https://www.heritage.nf.ca/articles/society/scottish.php. The 1945 census lists one family with the surname Campbell living in Hamilton, two in Mulligan, two in Newtown, and one in St. Michaels. My thanks to Amy Pickworth for locating this information. "1945 Population Census Index for the Communities in Labrador District," Newfoundland's Grand Banks: Genealogical and Historical Data for the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, accessed January 30, 2019, http://ngb.chebucto.org/C1945/145-lab-idx.shtml.

4 See McCord Museum objects M5380.0-1 (Innu) and M8371.6-7 (Wabenakis [Wolastoqiyik or Passamaquoddy]) for comparison. See also Moira T. McCaffrey, Sherry Farrell Racette, Guislaine Lemay, and Suzanne Sauvage, *Wearing Our Identity: The First Peoples Collection* (Montreal: McCord Museum, 2013), 228.

5 "On Canadian Ground: Stories of Footwear in Early Canada," Virtual Museum of Canada, accessed January 8, 2019, http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/sgc-cms/expositions-exhibitions/chaussure-footwear/english/exhibition/csrtv/sums.html#

6 "Labrador Brothers Await Word on Residential School Settlement," "'Somebody Has to Pay for Years of Abuse,' Says Richard Preston," CBC Radio-Canada, https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/labrador-residential-schools-lawsuit-brothers-1.3464184, accessed January 9, 2019. See also "Newfoundland and Residential Schools Healing and Commemoration," Government of Canada, accessed January 9, 2019, https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1511531626107/1539962009489.

Museum Observations

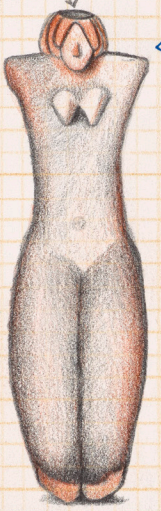
Jessica Deane Rosner

10.12.18 (Friday afternoon)

I am at the R.I.S.D. Museum to notice the underobserved. I've already run into a person I know. We had an awkward exchange.

I've wandered into a section with Egyptian objects. There is:

indented



← FIGURE OF A WOMAN

maybe lots of people observe her. I tend to go look at contemporary art. At any rate, I am old(er) and so my eyes and my eyeglasses seem to be at cross purposes. To see any detail I have to take OFF my glasses. To see where I am going I have to put them on. Off on off on off on all day long. The point is that when I first saw this small figure I thought – hoped, she was a cat.

←what I wanted to see.

Some things that are behind glass are impossible for me to see clearly. There are two papercuts from a Poetry Album I want to examine closely. The paper cuts are words – Persian lyric poetry. They are astoundingly delicate but I can't really SEE. It's frustrating and a little depressing. What special instrument was used to make those cuts? They have CURVES! (I can't even really draw them). But I can hardly see them.

I am going to the coffee shop.

But no! Not yet. Have wandered into the Repair exhibit. I sew and embroider but not properly. I am smitten with a beautiful denim patch that looks like a road.

The road stitches are white. I have strong feelings about this patch.

IN THE NEWS

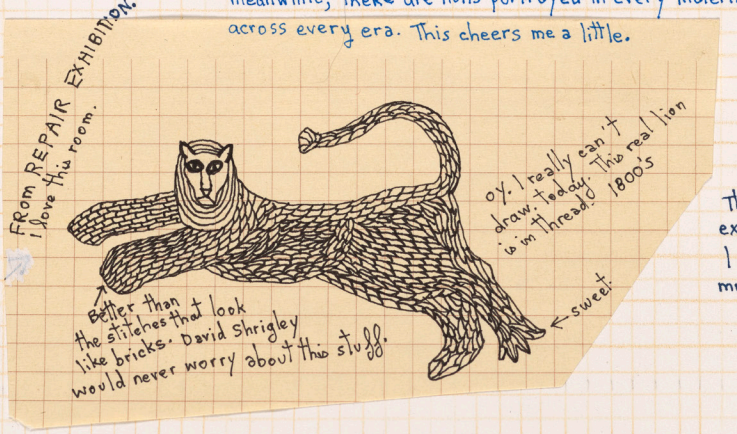
I haven't paid much attention because it is depressing. 35% of RI thinks Trump is great. How is that possible? People in Florida were ravaged and savaged by hurricane Michael. Stocks plunged. It's awful of me but anything that puts Trump in a bad light makes me a little happy. I suppose that makes me deplorable.

Nov. 8 2018

I am tired. Elections (mid-term) are over and I feel disheartened. It was not ALL bad, but it is bad. Of course, there have been more shootings. In California, where there WERE good guys with guns, 13 people were killed. Among them was a 27 year old boy who last year survived the mass killing of around 50 people. His dad's voice on the radio was filled with grief and anger.

Meanwhile, there are lions portrayed in every material across every era. This cheers me a little.

←drawn on Nov. 8. My earlier attempt was weak. It did not show the correct number of stitches.


FROM REPAIR EXHIBITION.
I love this room.
Better than the stitches that look like bricks. David Shrigley would never worry about this stuff.
oy. I really can't draw. Today is in threads. 1800's
sweet.

This visit was not so great, except for my lion.

I am sad. I do not like the music playing in the coffee shop.

RISD Museum Sunday 11.25.18 visit #3.

I thought I would draw things I covet at the gift shop but on this particular day I did not covet much and what I DID covet did not lend itself to drawing. Also, it suddenly seemed like a boring idea. Eventually I came to an exhibit I've seen before but am happy to be back. It is called THE PHANTOM OF LIBERTY. I love and admire much of the art but am really infatuated by the poetic, eloquent plaques, many written by the artists. For instance, this next to a painting/installation by the late, great, Ree Morton: UNTITLED (Signs of Love). I edited it a little. Apologies.

I was a housewife, right? I was a mother, I had children, I had a family to take care of. The teachers would talk a lot about commitment, being *committed to your work, and somehow that word had a lot of implications that I couldn't accept; that somehow if you are an artist you had to behave in a certain way, you had a certain way of looking at the world. I didn't think had anything to do with me so I would just never be committed, I would never say that I was an artist.*

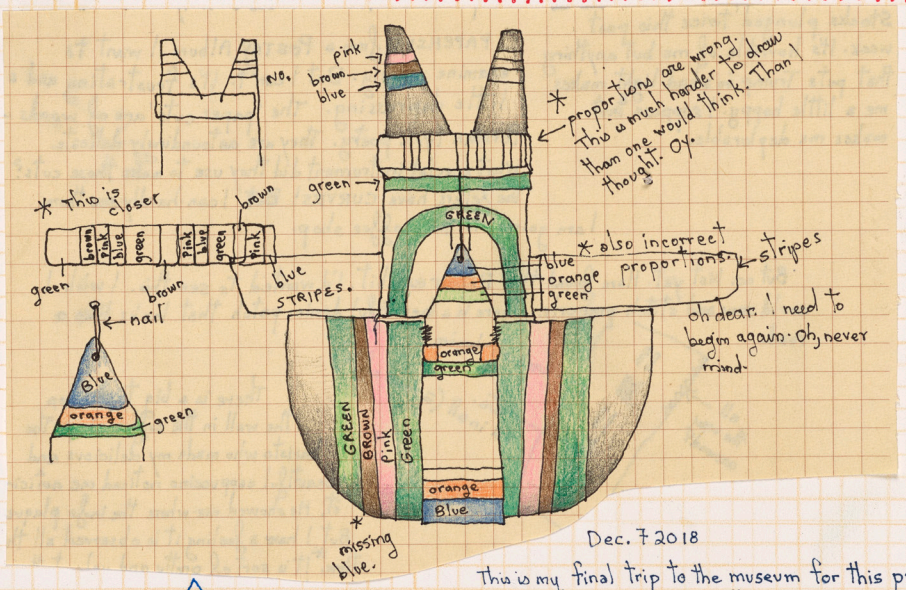
*she was.

*word is in italics on plaque.

And I was inspired by a lovely passage by Robert Mangold for DISTORTED CIRCLE WITHIN A POLYGON II (1972).

I am leaving soon because it is almost closing time. The guards are happy but not me. Being here today has helped me feel grounded and purposeful. Also a little anxious. There is so much I want to write, to explain.

Now it is dark. I have to go to the grocery store. I can imagine Ree Morton saying that very thing.



Dec. 7 2018

This is my final trip to the museum for this project. In the time since I started my mother has died, my son has graduated from college and my husband has had cataracts removed from both his eyes. The amazingly talented artist Dawn Clements died. She had cancer. She was just 60 years old. G.H.W. Bush died and his funeral was never ending. Flags are still at half mast. The stock market is crashing. The government is shut down (later this month).

On this final day I am in an empty room (sometimes the guard is here). I am going to draw a sculpture by Betty Parsons called Eared Chapel. It is one of the only artworks in this room I think I CAN draw. I found a parking spot DIRECTLY across the street but it is only good for one hour. So, here goes.

J. Deane Rosner
Dec. 24. 2018

Ronnie Goodman
American, b. 1960
The Birth of Occupy, 2012
From the portfolio *Occuprint*
Linocut on paper
Image/sheet: 45.8 × 30.5 cm. (18 1/16 × 12 in.)
Walter H. Kimball Fund 2012.70.1.17

Double Take

Flags Fly Like Wings, Music Makes Us Change

Ronnie Goodman: I created my print *The Birth of Occupy* while thinking about and listening to Miles Davis's *Birth of the Cool*, because no one is cooler than Miles, and music and revolution go together. In my print, Miles has a look of change, and just like he changed the sound of jazz, the Occupy Movement changed the U.S. In 2011, at the height of Occupy, I was paroled from San Quentin after ten years. I felt like I was being (re)born too. The marches and protests reminded me of when I was growing up in the 1960s and 1970s and people marched on Martin Luther King Day.

When I can I listen to music while painting, drawing, or cutting linoleum blocks for my prints. Music inspires me and I often add musicians, musical instruments, and musical notes to my paintings and prints. My favorites are Miles, John Coltrane, Jimi Hendrix, and Johnny Cash (who sang at Folsom State Prison). I grew up in San Francisco in times of great change, and music filled my life whether I was living in the psychedelic Haight Ashbury 'hood or the Fillmore Jazz District.

Music means freedom to me, and other images that remind me of freedom are wings, winged beings, wind, curtains, pages, flags, or banners moved by the wind—you can see a lot of these in my artwork. The beautiful lady in *Birth of Occupy* has powerful wings, and she also expresses how I feel about my African heritage, another element reappearing in my work.

I admire how the American flag waves gracefully in the wind, which inspires me to add it to my artwork as a thing of beauty. I also add stars and stripes to many of my pieces because they have a lot of conflicting meanings for me. Traditionally, the flag represents "justice for all," balancing the scales of justice, the way our African American ancestors fought for Abraham Lincoln in the Civil War, forty acres and a mule—all the things they taught us in school or that we found out on our own.

But I've also added the American flag to prints and paintings that express other things—injustice, poverty, police shootings, homelessness, prison, the Black Lives Matter movement, and scrabbling to collect cans to make recycling money. I have a lot of ideas for ways to add our flag to other artwork too.

For me, the American flag in my work means that African Americans are always Americans, no matter what happens. After all the police actions, the hate crimes, the lies, the insults, and the harm done to us, we will still stand up for America and for all of us. We will die for you all, and our flag brings us together.

Double Take

Ronnie Goodman /
Anita N. Bateman

Anita N. Bateman: A compilation in simple terms is an assortment of disparate things unified by a particular concept. The visual result of compilation is formal complexity—the layering of iconographic symbols to destabilize the appearance of uniformity. By bringing dissimilar elements together, compilations often become founts of new associations and information. Reminiscent of the emergence of Botticelli's Venus from the sea, here the metaphorical birth of the Occupy Wall Street movement, which took place in 2011, is pictorially frenetic, combining protestors, picket signs, and representations of dissent against the backdrop of the Golden Gate Bridge and the San Francisco Ferry Building.

Goodman's screenprint *The Birth of Occupy* is composed of several triangulations, including one that leads to Miles Davis, trumpet in hand. Davis's long hairstyle and seasoned visage suggest some time later in his career, after the 1957 release of the compilation album *Birth of the Cool*, which Goodman alludes to in the title. Davis's seemingly monumental size compared to his surroundings supports a theophanic interpretation of the scene and also acknowledges his enormous influence on the history of jazz and contemporary art. In 2008, for instance, the first career retrospective of figurative painter Barkley Hendricks opened at the Nasher Museum: appropriately titled *Birth of the Cool*, the exhibition flaunted Hendricks's mastery of large-scale canvases and his ability to capture the stylistic flare of black subjects from the late 1960s to the early 1980s.

On either side of Goodman's print are references to African sculpture. Column-like borders are formed by what appear to be a horned mask of the Djimini people of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire and an *akua'ba* fertility doll made by the Asante people of Ghana. In addition to the ritualistic uses of the ethnic groups from which they originate, African masks function as cultural heirlooms for diasporic communities. Now mass produced, they represent a transcultural—and sometimes Pan-African—affiliation for those who collect them.

Goodman painted another version of *The Birth of Occupy*. Equipped with information such as the various skin tones of Goodman's defenders, this work reveals the inherent racialization of people affected by regimes of power. Without compromising detail, the painting emphasizes the metaphorical and physical centrality of black folx in mobilization efforts. An angelic emblem for peace is an Afro-donning black woman who—enveloped in light and flanked by the anthropomorphized lions Justice and Change—remains unswayed by the chaos around her. Her deliberate calmness anchors the piece and adds contrast to the surrounding, active displays of protest. Slashed American flags are depicted in the hands of a gagged figure, suggesting the moral, legal, and political collapse of the tenets of democracy and national policy. The result is an indictment of the interwoven systems of labor, capital, and socioeconomic disenfranchisement that prompted collective action—and justifiable outrage.

If sonic polyphony defined the musical genius of Davis, Goodman's ability to cultivate an ecosystem of resistance contributes to his exceptional interrelation of form. Giving *occupy* another connotation, his work engages space and space-making as part of political intervention.

12/100

RGOODMAN 3/21/12

Double Take

Unknown artist
Native American Sachem, ca. 1700
Oil on canvas
84.1 × 76.5 cm. (33 ⅛ × 30 ⅛ in.)
Gift of Mr. Robert Winthrop 48.246

Lorén M. Spears: This portrait depicts Ninigret, a sachem—or leader—of the Niantic/Narragansett peoples. His headpiece, necklace, and earrings are made of beads from quahog shells, known today as wampum. Ninigret is dressed in a breechcloth, leggings, shoes, and cape made of animal hides. High moccasins—from the Narragansett word *mohkussunash*—protect his legs from the underbrush. He carries a scepter and wears a sheath with a knife.

This painting is significant because it presents a colonial-era Eastern woodland coastal Indigenous leader largely as he was, without the biases and stereotypes seen in later portraits of American Indians. English and other European artists creating images from the "new world" did frequently take creative license, however. The background terrain does not represent the local landscape. Colonists wrongly equated sachems with European kings, so the artist presented Ninigret as royalty, with a draped cape and scepter, although it is highly unlikely he would have had either.

Ninigret (ca. 1610–1677), also known as Janemo, was born into a long line of Niantic and Narragansett leaders. His mother was sister to two Narragansett sachems, Miantanomi and Canonicus. At different points in his life, Ninigret served as a sachem for the Niantic and the Narragansett peoples. This was a tumultuous time, as the European colonists occupying the region brought disease and war and displaced Indigenous communities. These conflicts culminated in 1675–76 with King Philip's War, which ended Indigenous control.

Today some academics believe this painting depicts Pequot leader Robin Cassacinamon (d. 1692), but for more than four hundred years the portrait has been identified as Ninigret, and to the Narragansett people it will remain as such. Regardless of the subject's identity, the image offers an important portrayal of a sachem before westward expansion and the birth of the Plains stereotype of the American Indian.

Double Take

Lorén M. Spears /
Kevin McBride

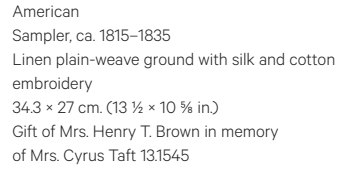
Kevin McBride: This portrait depicts a young Native man, seemingly of the standing or bearing of a sachem, clothed and adorned in garments and objects consistent with those worn by Native people in southern New England during the late 1600s and early 1700s. The subject has traditionally been identified as the Eastern Niantic sachem Ninigret, who was born around 1610 and died in 1677. When the painting was given to the RISD Museum by Robert Winthrop in 1948, his letter conveying the gift identifies this as Ninigret, but Winthrop also states, "I have no records of any kind concerning the portrait." Unsubstantiated evidence has been presented over the years that the painting was commissioned in Boston by John Winthrop Jr. around 1647 in gratitude for Ninigret's saving Winthrop's life, and that the medal in the necklace was given to Ninigret by Winthrop in 1676 for his role in King Philip's War. A more recent claim is that it depicts Ninigret II (ca. 1632–ca. 1723), but there is no documentation to support this contention.

The portrait could well be a depiction of Ninigret, but I offer another theory as to the identity of the man. If the painting was indeed commissioned by John Winthrop Jr. (1606–1676), there is a distinct likelihood that it could portray Mashantucket Pequot sachem Robin Cassacinamon, whose long friendship and close relationship with Winthrop Jr. and the Winthrop family is well documented.

It is not known when Cassacinamon was born, but he died in 1690. He was a young sachem at the time of the Pequot War (1636–1637), during which he declined to fight against the English. He and his community were subsequently spared, but they were placed under the authority of the Mohegan sachem Uncas. In July 1638, Uncas sent Cassacinamon and nine Mohegans to the Winthrop household in Boston with orders to buy a captive Pequot sachem's widow for ten fathoms of wampum beads, "and in case they could not buy her they should leave one man at your [Winthrop's] house to persuade and work their escape."[1] That man—Cassacinamon—remained in the Winthrop household for an unknown period of time as a servant to Adam, the youngest son of John Winthrop Sr.

In 1646, John Winthrop Jr. met with Cassacinamon as he planned a settlement in conquered Pequot Country, which was bounded on the west by the Thames River, on the east by the Pawcatuck River, and extended twenty miles inland. Winthrop Jr. eventually placed his plantation at Nameag (present-day New London), close to Cassacinamon's village, for support and protection. Until Winthrop's death in 1676, Winthrop Jr. and Cassacinamon forged a close relationship based on friendship and political and military alliances. This relationship eventually led Winthrop to help reestablish the Mashantucket Pequots in Pequot Country with the reservation that remains their home today.

1 Glenn W. LaFantasie, ed., *The Correspondence of Roger Williams*, vol. 1, 1629–1653 (Hanover, NH: Brown University Press / University Press of New England, 1988), 168.



American
Sampler, ca. 1815–1835
Linen plain-weave ground with silk and cotton embroidery
34.3 × 27 cm. (13 ½ × 10 ⅝ in.)
Gift of Mrs. Henry T. Brown in memory of Mrs. Cyrus Taft 13.1545

Double Take

Pamela A. Parmal /
Bethany Johns

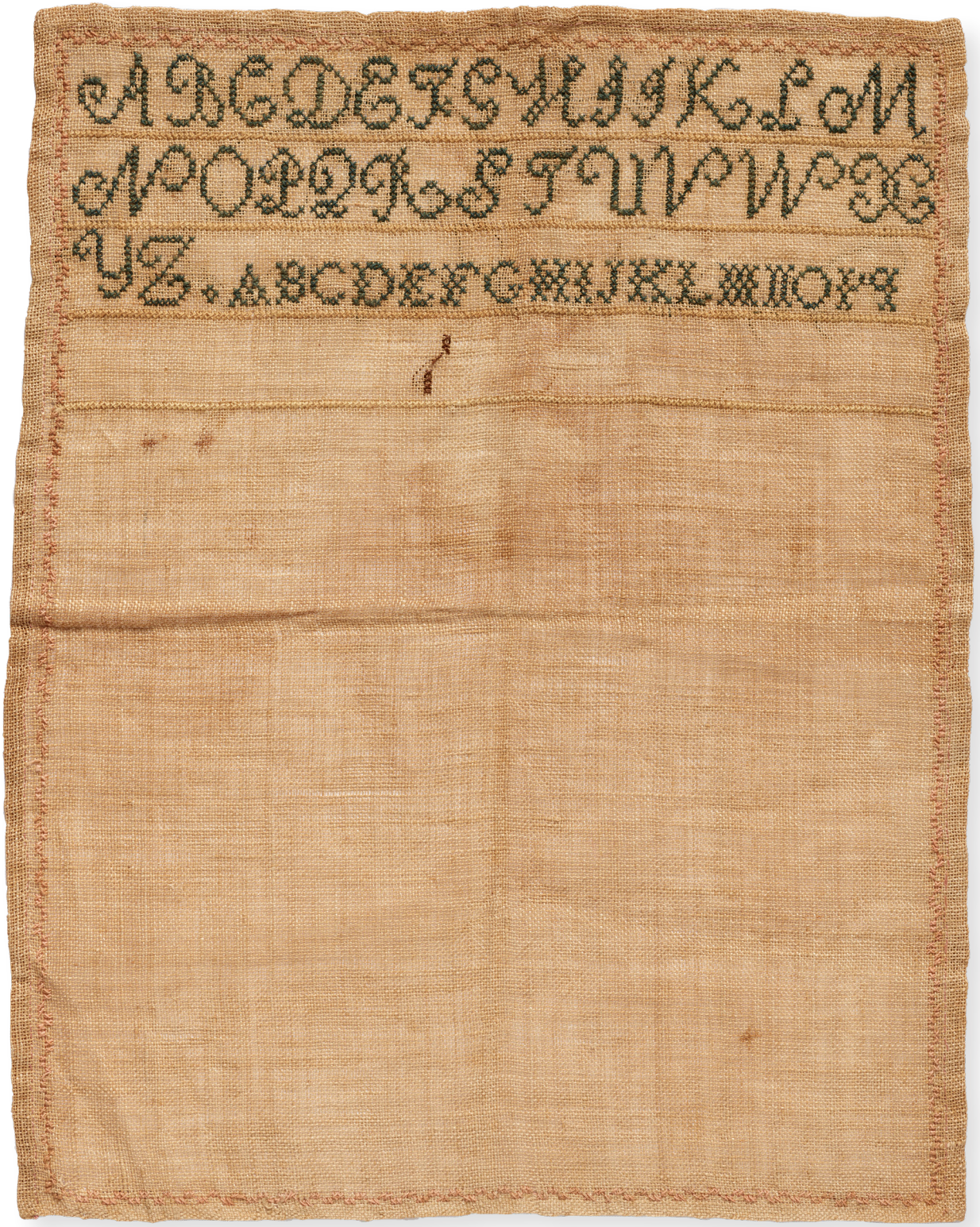
Pamela A. Parmal: One day about two hundred years ago, a young girl sat down and embarked on a familiar rite of passage for a person of her age, sex, and era: she began work on a sampler. First, she cut a piece of linen to the size she wanted and then hemmed the raw edges. Once the fabric was ready, she used blue cotton to neatly embroider the letters of the alphabet, beginning with the letter A. As she worked, she could not rely on the kind of pre-printed patterns common to embroidery kits today. Instead, her design was most likely copied from another sampler.

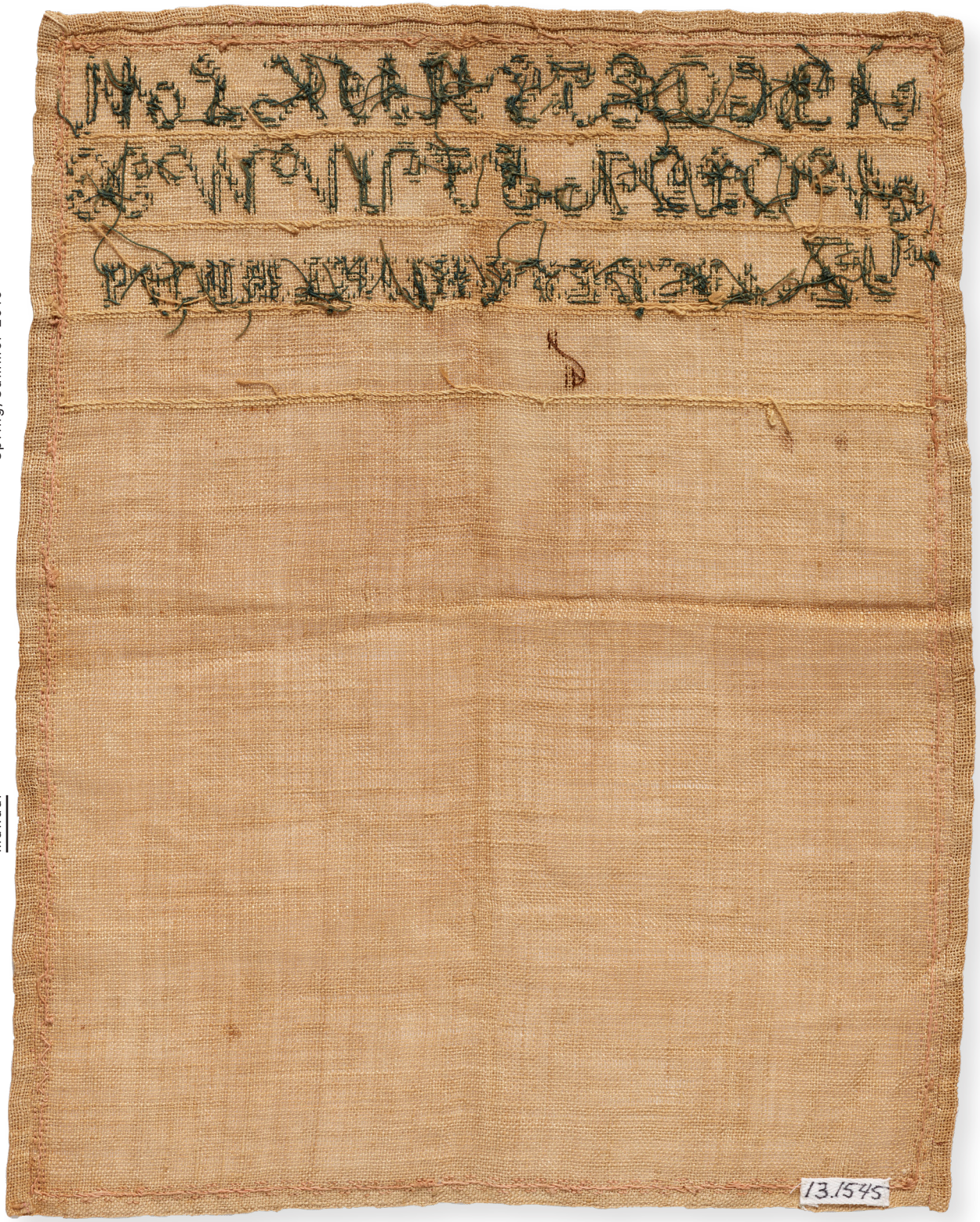
After finishing one alphabet in cursive capital letters, our sampler maker began work on a second row of letters in block capitals. This time, however, she only got as far as the letter Q. Why did she stop there? Was she bored? Did something else divert her attention? Perhaps, like many children of her era, she succumbed to illness. Such an outcome would not have been unusual, as child mortality rates in early nineteenth-century America reached as high as forty-six percent.[1]

This sampler was part of a group of eight others donated to the RISD Museum in 1913. At least five of these samplers were worked between 1817 and 1833 by the daughters of Providence residents Oliver and Sally Arnold Earle. Not surprisingly, the Earle family samplers share a number of similarities. For example, all contain multiple alphabets. Two of the samplers completed by the Earles' youngest daughters contain family histories, a feature typical of samplers from the 1820s and 1830s.

These later samplers list the names and birth years of ten children, beginning with Fanny in 1806 and ending with Julia in 1822. They also record several deaths, including two girls named Sarah who both died before the age of two. Since we know that the five surviving Earle girls all produced finished samplers—and since the two Sarahs would have been too young to sew, in any case—the question of who made this unfinished sampler may never be answered. Still, it's a reminder of just how precarious life was during this period, especially for young children.

1 Max Roser, "Child Mortality," https://ourworldindata.org/child-mortality, accessed December 20, 2018.




13.1545

Double Take

Pamela A. Parmal /
Bethany Johns

Bethany Johns: The stitch is a measure of time; the sampler is a material document of a person's—traditionally a female's—craft and patience. How many hours did it take her to establish the stitched border and baselines that would support the alphabet? How long to complete a full sampler? And why is this one incomplete, interrupted, a "saved document" to finish later or not at all? Can we imagine not finishing as an act of resistance, a reversal of the expectation of feminine perfection? Did this maker run out of interest, ability, time, patience, or life itself?

I contemplate this object as a historical document of women's work, a theme that has pervaded feminist art and design. Women's essential struggle to redirect their labor power from inside the home to the outside world projects itself indelibly onto the muteness of this anonymous sampler. After three lines of letters, the fourth was left blank; at minimum, she should have completed the capitals Q through Z. She was so close to finishing at least this much. I'm reminded of Martha Rosler's 1975 video *Semiotics of the Kitchen*: facing the camera, she systematically performs an alphabet of kitchen objects (A is for apron) until letters U through Z, then abandons the utensils to proceed with a semaphore of harsh gestural letterforms alone.

An alphabet provides the building blocks of language, and language is power. The basic elements are present in this sampler, but not the text—the utterance, the recitation, the assertion. As a graphic designer whose medium is language itself, I meet this object with the urge to inscribe a message, assert a statement, create a record: to speak.

American
Sampler (back), ca. 1815–1835
Linen plain-weave ground with silk and cotton embroidery
34.3 × 27 cm. (13 ½ × 10 ⅝ in.)
Gift of Mrs. Henry T. Brown in memory of Mrs. Cyrus Taft 13.1545

In typography, voice is a quality crafted by varying the weight, stroke, and stance of a font. A typographer's specimen sheet displays the alphabet's characters and tests their overall harmony by constructing language with them; a designer chooses a font for its inflection and contextual appropriateness as much as for its utility. Many early 19th-century samplers, like this one, use variants of a decorative script with a Roman all-capital alphabet. Did this stylistic limitation relegate women's voices to messages of piety and virtue? Today's sampler makers can download the replica digital font Cross Stitch Cursive, but lacking the handmade letterforms' charming inconsistencies, a new conformity of expression emerges.

Were samplers ever a site for personal declaration? Left to her own devices, what might an independent young woman have dared to publish in stitches on linen? Can we imagine her laboring over lines from Mary Wollstonecraft's 1792 *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*? What if she were herself to author a screed or manifesto as the sampler's body text?

Below her letterforms is an inscrutable mark, a meandering crimson stitch that is the start of something—a rose, a cross, a scarlet letter. Is it a hesitation, or a statement of refusal: did she simply lay the sampler aside to wander outside to play, to study, to write her own script, to fashion a life outside the lines?

Untitled Textile

Unraveling Narratives of Violence, Activism, and Abolition

Elon Cook Lee

Between two and five thousand years ago, a revolutionary new fiber was discovered on three separate continents. Soft white, pink, brown, or greenish puffs were plucked from sharp bolls, the seeds were carefully removed by combing, and the fibers were spun and woven into fine, breathable cloth called cotton. The early weavers of India, South America, and Africa used this durable new fabric to keep them safe from the elements, to hide what they did not want seen, and to accentuate what they did. Cotton cloth was dyed in a variety of colors, woven into patterns, and wrapped artfully or casually, depending on the culture, region, personal style, or dictates of societal rank. By the late seventeenth century, cotton was affordable to middle- and working-class folks who aspired to swathe themselves and decorate their homes with fashionable textiles. It made life easier and more comfortable

FIG. 1
English, textile manufacturer
After George Morland
English, ca. 1763–1804
Abolitionist Furnishing Textile, early 1800s
Copperplate-printed cotton plain weave; darned
95.3 × 68.6 cm. (37 ½ × 27 in.)
Gift of Mrs. Constance Wharton Smith 58.165.123

for a growing number of consumers even while it led to oppression and cultural collapse in many parts of the world.

In some West African cultures it is said that Anansi, a spider deity, introduced the spinning of cloth to humanity as he wove cautionary tales of greed and struggles for power. Well, greed and power intertwine at the heart of this untitled textile from the RISD Museum collection [Fig. 1].[1] In this article I'll spin for you a tale of a painter, a poet, and an insatiable printmaker. But that's not all.

Our story is set in the early 1780s in the bustling port city of London, England, where our three protagonists were living. It was a heady time for young white male British artists with entrepreneurial ambitions. Despite the loss of the American colonies and war on several fronts, there were still enough Britons with disposable income to support a thriving art market. The country continued to benefit from the international slave trade, income from plantations in the remaining British colonies, and slave-trade-adjacent industries such as barrel making, ship building, iron foundries, cotton-textile weaving and trading, and rum distilling. The English middle and upper classes were going crazy for toile prints, portraits painted by up-and-coming members of the Royal Academy of Art, and more economical prints of works by famous or fashionable artists.[2]

George Morland (1763–1804), a prodigiously talented artist, had been an honorary exhibitor at the Royal Academy at ten years of age. By the time he was twenty-two he had terminated his apprenticeship with his taskmaster father and set up his own account at a picture dealer, commencing a life as an artist-entrepreneur. In 1786 Morland married Anne Ward, the sister of the accomplished engraver William Ward. Through him, Morland met John Raphael Smith, a skillful and avaricious engraver, printer, painter, and all-around entrepreneur. This association led to one last important introduction: William Collins (ca. 1740–1812), an art dealer and an aspiring poet, whom Morland met while out celebrating the success of one of Smith's new ventures. Within a year of Morland and Collins's meeting, a series of events was set into motion that led to the eventual creation of a textile that is now in the RISD Museum collection.

In 1787, nine Quakers and three Anglican men came together in London to establish the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade.[3] The Society was the manifestation of close to twenty years of intellectual, religious, artistic, and literary movements that were developed in England and France in response to each country's role in the international slave trade.[4] The Society continuously rallied support for abolition through speeches, public debates, and the popularization of abolitionist iconography as exemplified by ceramicist Josiah Wedgwood's

now famous cameo [Fig. 2]. This piece, reproduced widely at a variety of price points, depicted a kneeling Black figure pleading for freedom and the Society's motto, "Am I Not a Friend and a Brother."

2

The Wedgwood cameos were an early example of what might be called a social-justice accessory—an item worn or displayed publicly to attract attention to one's political beliefs. They were the "Feminist" buttons, "NO DAPL" tee shirts, and "Black Lives Matter" yard signs of their time. A more direct parallel would be the brief 2016–2017 trend of wearing safety pins as a sign of wokeness and alliance with the Black Lives Matter movement.[5] Wedgwood's production of the anti–slave trade cameo—and its promotion by the Society in England, the Société des Amis des Noirs (Society of the Friends of the Negroes) in France, and abolitionists in the newly minted United States of America—managed to spread the message of a highly important cause while creating a desirable and fashionable commodity. The cameos, whether rimmed in gold or produced of cheap clay, became so ubiquitous that abolitionist Thomas Clarkson wrote, "The taste for wearing them became general, and thus fashion, which usually confines itself to worthless things, was seen for once in the honourable office of promoting the cause of justice, humanity and freedom."[6]

Within a year of the establishment of the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade, its motto, and the Wedgwood cameo, George Morland's new friend, William Collins, had set to writing a lengthy work called *The Slave Trade: A Poem* (1788). This poem, in contrast to literary conventions of the day, portrayed white men as licentious savages and wretches, "callous tyrants," and "lordly pamper'd drones" and the Black men, women, and children as honorable, humble, sympathetic, and brave human beings deserving of freedom. Collins's poem included the brief tale of a young African chief, his beloved wife, Ulkna, and their child, Tengarr, as the three are mercilessly separated by slave traders.[7] While not always eloquent, Collins worked diligently to engage the reader by finding universal narratives, paraphrasing the Bible, and unapologetically

FIG. 2
Wedgwood Manufactory
Staffordshire, England, active 1759–present
Slave-in-Chains Medallion
Stoneware (Jasperware), basalt, gold
3 × 2.8 × .3 cm. (1⅜ × 1⅛ × ⅛ in.)
Bequest of Mrs. Richard Baker
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston 96.779

3

4

FIG. 3
George Morland
European Ship Wrecked on the Coast of Africa, Known as African Hospitality,
1788–1790
Oil on canvas
87 × 122.2 cm. (34 ¼ × 48 ⅛ in.)
The Menil Collection, Houston

FIG. 4
George Morland
Replica of Execrable Human Traffick [The Affectionate Slaves, Slave Trade],
1789
Oil on canvas
85.1 × 121.9 cm. (33 ½ × 48 in.)
The Menil Collection, Houston

silhouette

FIG. 5
English, textile manufacturer
After George Morland
English, ca. 1763–1804
Abolitionist Furnishing Textile (detail), early 1800s
Copperplate-printed cotton plain weave; darned
95.3 × 68.6 cm. (37 ½ × 27 in.)
Gift of Mrs. Constance Wharton Smith 58.165.123

rousing guilty feelings. In a biography of George Morland he wrote in 1805, Collins claimed that it was his poem that inspired two of Morland's best-known paintings.

Morland's *European Ship Wrecked on the Coast of Africa*, also known as *African Hospitality* (1788–1790) [Fig. 3] and *The Execrable Human Traffick, or the Affectionate Slaves* (1789) [Fig. 4], are the two paintings repeated across this untitled textile [Fig. 5]. They were painted at a moment when several historians agree that Morland was both turning toward moral themes in his work and attempting to capitalize upon "the sudden interest in abolition."[8] Regardless of Morland's motivations, one can't deny his masterful depiction of Africans caught up in a violent and dehumanizing system. It also deserves notice that, during a time when Africans were almost universally portrayed in dehumanizing caricatures, these paintings not only represented their subjects faithfully but infused them with human dignity that would have been utterly foreign to a great majority of the public.

Hospitality also includes a depiction of the 1782 wreck of the Grosvenor, a three-masted East Indiaman carrying about 150 mostly white European crew members and passengers that ran aground in South Africa. The story of the *Grosvenor* was portrayed in countless pulp novels, scandal-rag articles, plays, and other forms of popular media in England and South Africa for more than two hundred years.[9] Many of these stories focused on the inherently violent, cruel, greedy, and lascivious nature of the "Kaffirs" or "Hotentots" of Africa and vulnerable white female passengers being forcibly married and worked by local tribesman. Even though Morland's painting was inspired by the wreck, he chose to contradict many of the more popular versions of the story, and possibly the reality of the situation, in order to make a pro-abolition point.[10]

George Morland appears to have left England only once in his life, briefly, to study art in Paris when he was sixteen. Instead of embarking on adventures around the globe, he explored the world and its people through the work of other artists. Throughout Morland's childhood, his father demanded that he copy famous works by Dutch, German, and French painters.[11] To create *Traffick* and *Hospitality*, he likely studied prints of tropical plant life and sketches from travelogues created by various explorers of the African continent [Fig. 6]. The clothing worn by the Africans in both paintings is fairly consistent with what many coastal West African ethnic groups would have worn in that time period, though the textiles likely would have included a variety of patterns and colors. The faces of his African subjects are clearly individual portraits, for which Morland prob-

ably employed local models. Another telling sign of his use of models in England instead of Africa could be in the simplicity of how he depicted each African's hairstyle. A quick exploration of contemporary portraits of West Africans by West Africans reveals a diversity of hairstyles, jewelry, and headdresses worn by women and some men. Africans styled their hair according to their "tribal affiliation, status, sex, age, occupation," and so on.[12] The short afros depicted in Moreland's paintings were more commonly seen on enslaved or formerly enslaved Africans in Britain. After slavery became illegal in England in 1772, newly freed Black Londoners like Olaudah Equiano and Quobna Ottobah Cugoano, writers of now famous autobiographies, would have been walking the same streets as Morland and his friends. By 1800 there would have been about ten thousand Black Britons in a city of close to one million.

In *Execrable Human Traffick*, it appears as though Morland not only incorporated Collins's narrative of the young African chief and his family, but by posing the chief in a certain posture, referenced the popular Josiah Wedgwood cameo, or what some modern commentators might call the "supplicant slave trope."[13] *Traffick* and *Hospitality*, which were exhibited internationally, were likely the only paintings or prints made between the 1770s and 1800 that focused on Black humanity and the plight of the enslaved.[14] Under the titles *Traite des Nègres* and *Africain Hospitalier*, these images circulated in France as both original paintings and as prints created by Morland's collaborator and supporter, John Raphael Smith. Although Morland was a prolific artist who made at least eight hundred paintings in the waning years of his life, he is actually most well known through prints of his work made by Smith, his brother-in-law William Ward, and a few other artists.[15]

Smith seems to have begun printing *Traffick* and *Hospitality* almost immediately after Morland completed the paintings. According to one late-nineteenth-century Morland biographer, Smith and other unscrupulous printmakers sometimes didn't even bother to wait for the paintings to dry before racing off to turn them into mezzotint prints.[16] Some of Morland's early biographers complain of how little he received for each print by Smith. While Morland might have made between five and thirty pounds for the two *Traffick* and *Hospitality* canvases, Smith could print hundreds of copies of them. And by all accounts he did, mostly in black and white, while in lesser numbers coloring them with brilliant paints and adding embellishments of palm trees, bushes, mountains, and clouds that never existed in the originals. Smith owned a fast moving, frequently expanding shop in late eighteenth-century London. Dozens of apprentices possessing varying levels of skill appear to have completed the bulk of the work produced in the shop.

6

William Collins wrote the poem, George Morland created the paintings, and John Raphael Smith produced the majority of the early prints, but who created the textile? In 1825 Frédéric Etienne Joseph Feldtrappe, a French textile engraver, produced *Traite des Nègres*, a printed cotton toile that has a genealogy that is as complex as RISD's textile. *Traite* included images from Morland's *Traffick* and *Hospitality*, along with two additional images by French printmaker Nicolas Colibert. Though there is some controversy regarding their origins, Colibert's prints were likely based on paintings by little-known French artist Pierre Thomas Victor Fréret.[17] Feldtrappe's *Traite des Nègres* textile [Fig. 7] was created for the French market at a time when France continued to wrestle with what to do with its remaining slave colonies in the Caribbean and South America. A sample from Feldtrappe's textile exists in the Metropolitan Museum of Art's collection, and there are similar fragments in about ten other collections around the United States, including at Colonial Williamsburg. These textiles clearly pull from Smith's prints of Morland's paintings, but parts of the images are inverted or tweaked. It is doubtful that Feldtrappe's textile and the one in the RISD Museum were created by the same maker. The French textile is darker, heavier, and has a serious case of horror vacui. The museum's textile, on the other hand, uses white space to differentiate between scenes [Fig. 5].

7

Despite months of research on the RISD Museum's textile, the artist who engraved its images still remains a mystery. Known among staff simply as "the Abolitionist Textile," it was likely produced in England for the British abolitionist market in the early 1800s. The production date is probably between Smith's 1791 printings and the 1807 passage of the British Slave Trade Act. The act, which outlawed international slave trading in the British Empire, was enforced aggressively by the Royal Navy regardless of the nationality of the ship. This effectively marked the beginning of the end of the international slave trade.

Ending the slave trade, however, did not end the use of enslaved labor in the New World plantation system. Groups such as the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade may have been anti-trade, but they publicly avoided pushing policies that would end slavery itself. That stance may also be why the Society was a predominantly white group. Black Britons chose instead to join Sons of Africa, a group that did seek the end of slavery in the British colonies. By the end of the eighteenth century there was clear recognition in England, France, and the United

FIG. 6
Artist unknown
Slave-Traders Embarking Slaves
Hand-colored mezzotint
46.7 × 65.5 cm.
National Library of Australia
U4603 NK10907

FIG. 7
Frédéric Etienne Joseph Feldtrappe
French, 1786–1849
After a painting by George Morland
British, 1763–1804
Traite des Nègres (The Slave Trade) (detail),
early 19th century
Cotton, roller printed
256.5 × 83.8 cm. (101 × 33 in.)
Rogers Fund, 1926 26.189.2
The Metropolitan Museum of Art

States that the peculiar institution was necessary to the continued rapid growth of the European and American economies.[18] Threatening the flow of funds, exotic goods like chocolate, and necessities such as sugar and cotton consistently turned legislators and casual allies against abolitionist movements. This may be a key reason why Smith's versions of Morland's works sold so well: these images concentrated on the goodness of free Africans and the cruelty of the slave trade while avoiding the violent futures that awaited Africans upon their importation into New World plantation systems. These images didn't ask their White audiences to consider how slave labor provided comfort, ease, power, and a variety of economical products to White publics in various parts of the world. A jaunty little poem written the same year as William Collins's *Slave Trade* reminds us that even though the horrors were an ocean away, the British public was not ignorant of the violence, but perhaps instead chose to ignore it. William Cowper writes:

> I own I am shock'd at the purchase of slaves,
> And fear those who buy them and sell them are knaves;
> What I hear of their hardships, their tortures, and groans
> Is almost enough to draw pity from stones.
> I pity them greatly, but I must be mum,
> For how could we do without sugar and rum?
> Especially sugar, so needful we see?
> What? give up our desserts, our coffee, and tea![19]

The silence of anti–slave trade activists on the issue of slavery ties directly to silence on another issue tangled up with the production of social-justice textiles like the RISD Museum example. As cotton fibers flowed from New World plantations to English mills, there appeared to be little questioning of the sense in printing anti-slavery images on a product that was produced by African slave labor and often traded by Europeans for African slaves. According to historian Stanley Alpern, there was a major market in West Africa for European- and Indian-made cotton textiles from the end of the 1400s to well into the 1800s. Olaudah Equiano (1745–1797) would have agreed. In his autobiography, published in Britain in 1789, he described how men and women in his village, located in what we now know as Nigeria, wore calico, a textile likely imported by local traders. Africans of all classes enjoyed the "cheapness, durability, attractive patterns, and bright" fade-resistant colors found on a wide variety of imported textiles.[20] African traders had discerning tastes and often preferred all-cotton Indian-made products over the cotton-linen mixes manufactured in Europe. West Africans worked on

the barter system, and fabric became the "largest category of export" marketed there. It was a key trade good used to buy the men, women, and children who would go on to labor until death on the cotton farms of the American South, the Caribbean, and Latin America.[21]

Although we do not know who printed this fabric, where its cotton came from, or who labored over its fibers, we do know what it was made to be used for. In the late eighteenth century, around the time *Traffick* and *Hospitality* were produced, travel accounts from visitors to India document the purchase of printed cotton fabric to decorate the inside of their homes.[22] This may have led to or been part of a trend popularized by Madame de Pompadour, the highly influential mistress of King Louis XV, and Catherine the Great of Russia, who both had begun decorating entire bedrooms with toile printed fabrics.[23] The RISD Museum's textile, like Feldtrappe's *Traite des Nègres*, was created as a furnishing fabric. These textiles could have been used in a variety of ways—to upholster chairs, as window drapes, as quilts to warm the bed, or as bed curtains. The Musée d'Histoire de Nantes in France has a fine example of how Feldtrappe's *Traite des Nègres* was turned into curtains to decorate a four-poster bed. Closer to home, Historic New England has a fragment of *Traite* in their collection that they note was used as a bed curtain in the historic Philip Call House in Ipswich, Massachusetts.[24]

Late 1830s Ipswich was embroiled in pro- and anti-slavery debates that led to the splintering of the local Methodist church and the creation of a men's organization, the Anti-slavery Society, and the even more politically active Ipswich Female Anti-Slavery Society. The Call House was owned after 1820 by John Caldwell, a relative of Josiah Caldwell and his wife, Lucy Lord Caldwell.[25] Josiah and Lucy founded the Female Anti-Slavery Society and hosted anti-slavery lecturers and salons in their home or the homes of other society members in the small Massachusetts town. A bit of digging into the minutes of both the male and female societies' records may reveal participation by members of John Caldwell's household in various anti-slavery events where a length of *Traite des Nègres* may have been obtained.

The use of densely detailed and even narrative toile prints like *Traite* for bedroom furnishings was popular at a time when bedrooms were a common space for women to entertain female guests. This is in an era when women spent much of their lives sewing and were circumscribed to the domestic sphere. Socially bound to home or church, they were prohibited from voting or any type of political action beyond single-sex social organizations. The appearance of a fragment of a *Traite* textile in the Philip Call House may speak to the political leanings of former

female residents from a time when the slave trade and abolition were hot topics of discussion. Considered in this context, perhaps the RISD Museum textile was used like a coffee-table book or a provocative piece of wall art would be used today—to spark conversations with house-guests or demonstrate political attitudes.

Textiles tell others who we are, or who we want others to think we are. They speak to our cultures, our heritages, our individuality, and the ways in which we conform. In the beginning, cotton was picked, processed, and made into clothing by family or community members working close to home. But for at least the last several hundred years, the owner of any piece of cloth might live in a different part of the world from where the cotton bushes were picked by fast-plucking hands, and far again from the click and whirr of machines that processed, spun, and wove it. This is not to mention its dyeing, printing, cutting, sewing, folding, packaging, and shipping. By the time a finished piece of cloth reaches any of us, it has likely come from a multitude of places, touched by unknown numbers of hands.

Each piece of cloth has human stories to tell. Often these stories are erased by the international industrial machine of commerce. Yet, every once in a while, we realize that pulling a single thread may send us spinning back through time, across oceans, in search of not only pickers and weavers but poets, painters, and printmakers, insect harvesters, ship captains, castaways, slave traders, African chiefs, lovers torn asunder, and good Samaritans. And that isn't the half of it.

In the spring of 2018, a bolt of faded two-hundred-year-old cotton fabric was resurrected from Costumes and Textiles Department storage at the RISD Museum. This cloth, according to its catalogue card, was once white with a deep crimson red toile print. In the intervening years it has become shades of dried-blood red, watery where it was once white and nearly brown at its darkest points. The registrar or curator who first logged it into the museum's collection in 1958 wrote, "'Trading of Slaves in West Indies.' Scenes of colored men giving drink to fallen white man. Negro being beaten by 2 whites, weeping on boat. Tropical vegetation etc." The cloth was titled "textile" and added to what would become a collection of thirty thousand objects in the Costumes and Textiles Department. It was likely not seen again for more than sixty years. As though the cloth and its story could not remain silently contained by obscurity, in the spring of 2018 a dedicated colleague noticed the textile and placed it in the gloved hands of this author, whose vocation is telling stories of slavery as they relate to current race relations.

This textile's scenes continue to generate empathy, create tension, and provoke questions. Why, more than two hundred years after the abolition of the slave trade, is our nation is still forcibly separating families of color? Does wearing a shirt with images of enslaved or oppressed peoples make me look woke? How are artists today collaborating with, or profiting from, modern social-justice movements?

The cotton industry helped fuel the colonization of the New World, the draining of Africa, the mass displacement of populations on two continents, and, ultimately, the construction of power structures that have remained largely intact over four centuries.[26] This fabric in particular manages to weave together complicated stories of slavery and abolition, violence and beauty. It leads us to the work of three individuals: an overlooked poet, a gifted painter, and an enterprising printmaker.

What imagery would Collins, Morland, and Smith produce today? Might there be dresses, yoga mats, or cell-phone cases imprinted with their work? And how would we respond?

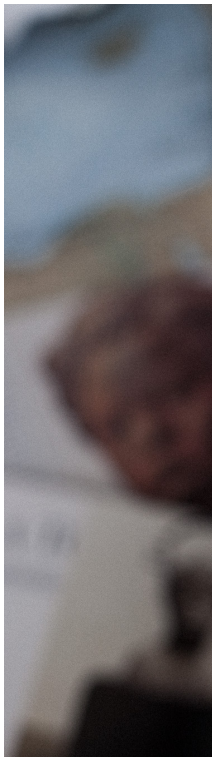
Made-to-order products sold online in 2019 include beach towels, yoga mats, coffee mugs, cell phone cases, clothing and more

1 Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton* (New York: Vintage Books, 2014), 6.
2 Cybèle T. Gontar, "A Fashion for Abolition: Frédéric Etienne Joseph Feldtrappe's *Traite des Nègres* (ca. 1825)," Common-Place website, sponsored by the American Antiquarian Society and the University of Connecticut, accessed February 6, 2019, http://www.common-place-archives.org/vol-14/no-01/lessons/#.XFsVm1xKg2w.
3 Nat Williams, "Abolishing Slavery One Image at a Time: An Abolitionist Print in the Rex Nan Kivell Collection," National Library of Australia web site, accessed February 6, 2019, https://www.nla.gov.au/blogs/treasures/2014/12/11/abolishing-slavery-one-image-at-a-time.
4 David Bindman, "Am I Not a Man and a Brother? British Art and Slavery in the Eighteenth Century," *Anthropology and Aesthetics* 26 (Autumn 1994): 68–82, https://www.jstor.org/stable/20166905.
5 Shane Paul Neil, "Is Safety Pin Box the Gift for 'White Allies'?" NBC News, December 22, 2016, https://www.nbcnews.com/news/nbcblk/safety-pin-box-gift-white-allies-n695246.
6 Thomas Clarkson, *The History of the Rise, Progress, and Accomplishment of the Abolition of the African Slave-Trade by the British Parliament* (London: John W. Parker, 1839), 417.
7 I am fairly certain that Ulkna and Tengarr are names made up by the young poet, who never left the isle of Albion. But while the names may be fictitious, the sentiments conveyed through them were true enough. See William Collins, *The Slave Trade: A Poem. Written in the Year 1788. Dedicated to the Gentlemen, Who Compose That Truly Noble, Generous, and Philanthropic Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade. from This Poem Mr. G. Morland Painted His Picture, Descriptive of the Slave Trade; a Subscription Print from Which, with Its Companion, Is Now Engraved and Published by Mr. J. R. Smith, of King-Street, Covent Garden* (London: J. Desmond, 1793), http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/642524819.
8 Marcus Wood, *Blind Memory: Visual Representations of Slavery in England and America 1780–1865* (Abingdon-on-Thames, UK: Routledge, 2000), 36.
9 Ian E. Glenn, "'The Wreck of the *Grosvenor*' and the Making of South African Literature,'" *English in Africa* 22, no. 2 (1995).
10 Ibid., 5.
11 Ralph Waldo Emerson, *George Morland: Painter, London (1763–1804)* (New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1901), http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/963747253.
12 Shane White and Graham White, "Slave Hair and African American Culture in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries." *Journal of Southern History 61*, no. 1 (1995): 45–76, www.jstor.org/stable/2211360.
13 Zoe Trod, "Am I Still Not a Man and a Brother? Protest Memory in Contemporary Antislavery Visual Culture," *Slavery & Abolition: A Journal of Slave and Post-Slave Studies* 34, no. 2 (2013), https://doi.org/10.1080/014403 9X.2013.791172.
14 Amelia Peck, *Interwoven Globe: The Worldwide Textile Trade, 1500–1800* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art and Yale University Press, 2013), 282.
15 Ann Wyburn-Powell, "George Morland (1763–1804): Beyond Barrell: Re-examining Textual and Visual Sources," *British Art Journal* 7, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2006): 55. Also J. T. Herbert Baily, *George Morland; A Biographical Essay* (London: Otto Limited Carmelite House, E.C., 1906), 46, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015015682894.
16 George Dawe and J. J. (Joshua James) Foster, *The Life of George Morland* (London: Dickinsons, 1904).
17 See Cybèle T. Gontar's article, "A Fashion for Abolition: Frédéric Etienne Joseph Feldtrappe's *Traite des Nègres* (ca. 1825)," 2013, for a detailed history of Feldtrappe's version of the textile.
18 Peck, *Interwoven Globe*, 282.
19 David Brion Davis and Steven Mintz, eds., "Pity for Poor Africans" (1788) by William Cowper, in *The Boisterous Sea of Liberty: A Documentary History of America from Discovery through the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).
20 Stanley B. Alpern, "What Africans Got for Their Slaves: A Master List of European Trade Goods," *History in Africa* 22 (1995): 6, https://doi.org/10.2307/3171906.
21 Peck, *Interwoven Globe*, 284.
22 Gontar, "A Fashion for Abolition," 2013.
23 Starr Siegele, *Toiles for All Seasons: French and English Printed Textiles* (Piermont, NH: Bunker Hill Publishing, 2014), 19; See also Gontar, "A Fashion for Abolition," 2013.
24 Naomi Gardner, "Embroidering Emancipation: Female Abolitionists and Material Culture in Britain and the USA, c.1780–1865" (PhD diss., Royal Holloway, University of London, March 2016).
25 Augustine Caldwell, *John Caldwell and Sarah Dillingham Caldwell, His Wife, Ipswich, Mass., 1654: Genealogical Records of Their Descendants, Eight Generations, 1654–1900* (Ipswich, MA: Augustine Caldwell, 1904), https://archive.org/details/johncaldwellsara1904cald/page/n8.
26 Beckert, *Empire of Cotton*, 92.

Letters to Four Venerable Bodies

Becci Davis

objects are identified on page 96



Paraetonium
(Maṭrūḥ)
EGYPT

Spring/Summer 2019

Manual

My Dear Bust of a Child,

Whose little boy are you?
I realize that this is a loaded question since I think of you as both a vessel in a museum and someone's child, who sat quietly and still as a craftsman carved your likeness in wax over two thousand years ago.
Know that you are beautiful. Know that you are perfect. Know that you are significant and brilliant and loved. You belong only to yourself. You are the guardian of your contents, not simply a container. You are of value.
Your face resembles my own. It reminds me that we have always been here and always will be. Though others may insist on naming you, defining you, and deciding where you come from, pay no mind.
The world is not your master, but your playground.

-Always, B.

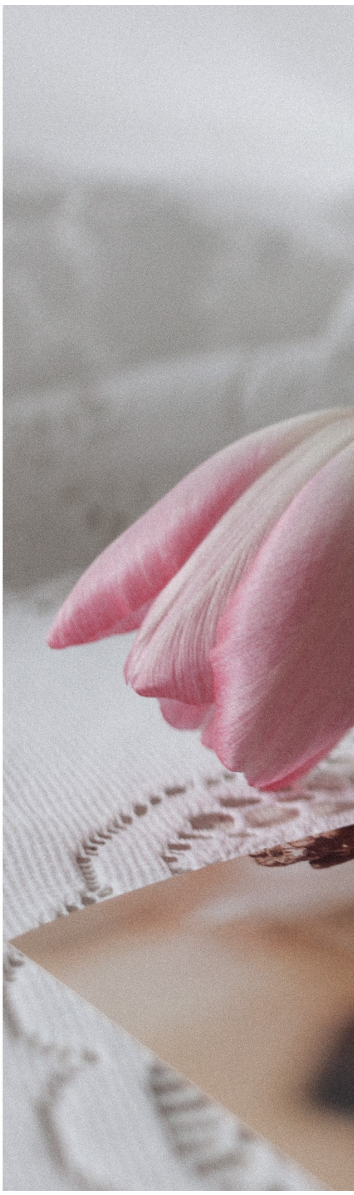
BLACK

BLACK PORTRAITURE[S] IV
THE COLOR OF SILENCE
Vol.
5
BP:IV

My Gentleman,

My eyes dance along your flesh with its beautiful imperfections. From the soft curve of your furrowed brow, I fall into your eyes. Your gaze is steady, strong, and gentle. Distant, yet not detached, it conveys unflinching resolve. As if the things you've seen forever stained your face with worry. Did those breaking clouds form a storm so dark it's still surprising that you made it through? Although I am intrigued by the mystery of your identity, what really draws me in is what you stand for. You embody a story that so many of us share. You played a part in the making of America. Though your name has been forgotten, your presence has not been erased. We will never forget.

Yours, B.



From Slaver
The Hauntological Present:
Ghosts, Archives and Visual
Resistance to Mental Colonialism

The Hauntological Present:
Ghosts, Archives and Visual
Resistance to Mental Colonialism

Dear Bust of an African Woman,

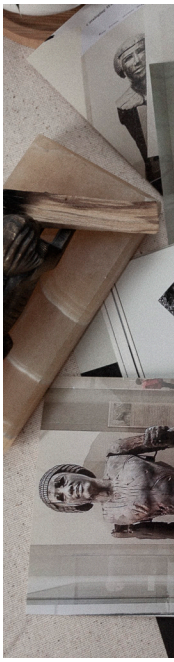
You are the only object I remember from my first trip to this museum. It was 2012. I had been living in Rhode Island for less than three months. You held me spellbound, mesmerized by your articulation of detail; tightly coiled locs, drop earrings, soft rounded nose, full lips, coral necklace draped over bare shoulders, regal posture.

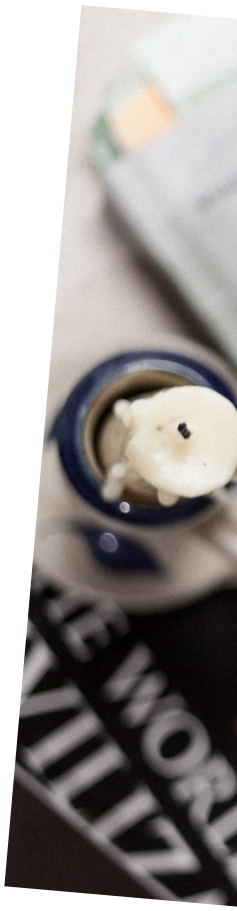
You are stunning.

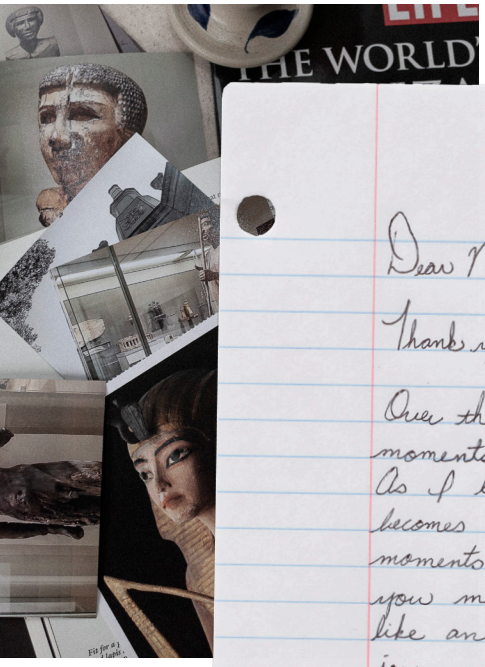
Thank you for your presence. Thank you for holding down the European galleries as if you were their queen. It can't be easy always centered by the gaze. Your visage reminds us of the beauty and dignity in Blackness that history conveniently ignores.

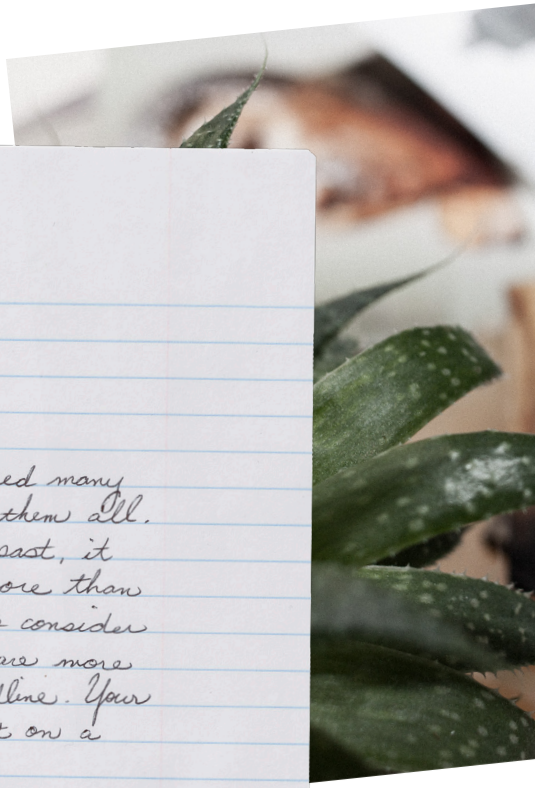
Thank you for sitting in Cordier's studio as he captured your essence in clay. That couldn't have been easy either. So that why you are frozen forever throwing sideeye, or is it full on shade?

With Warmth and Pride,
B.









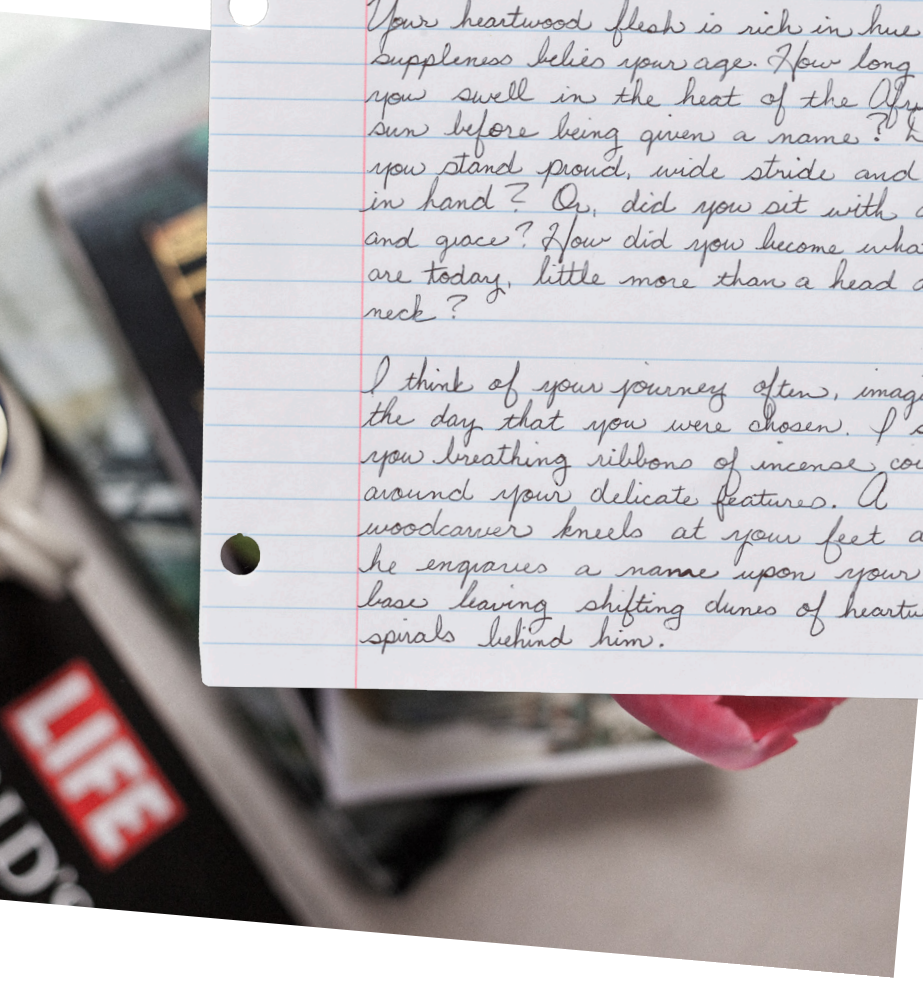
Dear Nameless,

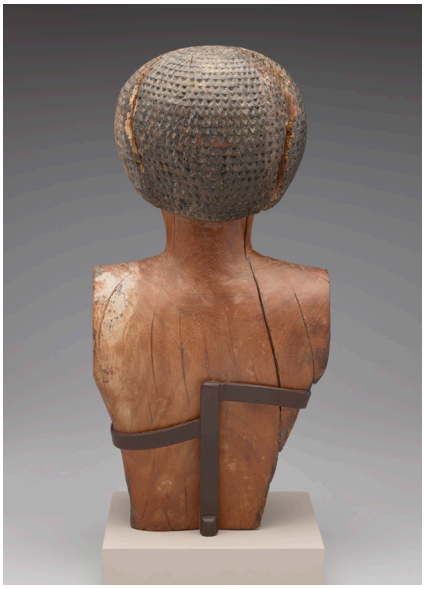
Thank you for your presence.

Over the past year, we have shared many moments. I am grateful for them all. As I learn more about your past, it becomes clear that we share more than moments. It is impossible to consider you merely an object. You are more like an embodiment of my bloodline. Your journey mirrors our own, just on a much longer timeline.

Your heartwood flesh is rich in hue. Its suppleness belies your age. How long did you swell in the heat of the African sun before being given a name? Did you stand proud, wide stride and staff in hand? Or, did you sit with dignity and grace? How did you become what you are today, little more than a head and neck?

I think of your journey often, imagining the day that you were chosen. I see you breathing ribbons of incense, coiling around your delicate features. A woodcarver kneels at your feet as he engraves a name upon your base leaving shifting dunes of heartwood spirals behind him.





I imagine the first night in the tomb, your Ka seeping into wood like rain soaking earth. Branching networks that once pumped sap, now slowly swell with afterlife, fueling your soul's nightly resurrection.

Do you remember the name carved upon your base? Do you whisper it to comfort yourself at night? Does the separation of name and body leave you powerless and empty? Does true power lie in the secrets we keep?

When I look into the almond hollows of your face, I wonder what you would have seen on the voyage out of your homeland, if they still held eyes.

Will you share with me the story of your scar? Did the wet salt air of the sea cleave your forehead in two as you made your way across the stormy Atlantic in the dark belly of a ship?

Whatever stories you hold close, know that I see you. In these temperature and humidity controlled boxes of New England institutions, we have no choice but to know ourselves and remember where we came from.

Eternally yours,

Saint George, Antonio Tempesta, and the Ravages of Time

Jamie Gabbarelli

Despite being abraded, rubbed, torn, and buckled, a large sheet of parchment recently found in the RISD Museum collection [Fig. 1] has preserved an image of intense vitality. Occupying the forefront of the picture plane, the scene depicts the fourth-century saint George of Lydda slaying a dragon: the most famous episode in his legendary hagiography. Saint George, dressed in a fictive mix of ancient Roman and sixteenth-century ceremonial armor and lifting a short sword above his head, is about to strike a fatal blow toward the already wounded beast beneath him. His muscular horse, eyes bulging and nostrils flaring from the strain, rears on his powerful hind legs, overcoming the mythical creature with his ponderous mass. The composition—aswirl with coiling bodies, writhing tails, curling locks, and twisting feathers—elegantly crystallizes a moment in a rapid, violent struggle. Here, time is frozen in a beautiful image that invites us to imagine what has just happened, and what is yet to come.

FIG. 1
After, or possibly by, Antonio Tempesta
Italian, 1555–1630
Saint George and the Dragon, 1600–1700
Ink and gouache on vellum
44.5 × 36.5 cm. (17 ½ × 14 ⅜ in.)
Museum collection INV2006.205.18

2 3

FIG. 2
Antonio Tempesta
Portrait of Henry IV, King of France
Etching
49.8 × 36 cm. (19 $^{10}/_{16}$ × 14 $^{3}/_{16}$ in.)
National Library of France

FIG. 3
Antonio Tempesta
Saint George Killing the Dragon
Etching
17.8 × 12.9 cm. (7 x 5 $^{1}/_{16}$ in.)
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

FIG. 4
Antonio Tempesta
Saint George and the Dragon
Black chalk, pen and brown ink,
brown wash (recto),
red chalk outlines (verso)
23.4 × 16.9 cm. (9 ¼ × 6 ⅝ in.)
© Christie's Images LTD (2019)

This striking but very damaged drawing was one of the first works I chanced upon as I delved into the "mystery boxes" in the storage vault of the Prints, Drawings, and Photographs Department. As a new curator at the RISD Museum, one of my first duties was to "familiarize myself with the collection", as we would say in dry professional-speak. The reality of this side of my work is, in fact, one of almost daily discovery and delight, but also of humble recognition of the limits of professional knowledge and expertise. In the months following my first encounter with Saint George, I looked closely, gathered information, searched for comparable works, and asked for expert opinions in an attempt to learn all that I could so as to identify, categorize, and "explain" the object I had in front of me. While my search has yielded some interesting insights, Saint George has also become for me a symbol of how much can be lost when something as fragile and fleeting as a drawing is tossed by the tempest of time.

Let's start, then, with what we know. This meticulous drawing was executed in a very peculiar technique of pen and ink and brown wash on prepared parchment. The use of these media in drawings on paper was extremely common in the early modern period, but extremely rare on vellum.

4

The process the artist devised was also unusual. Rather than establishing the design in pen and then adding shading and highlights with wash and lead white, the draughtsman first prepared the piece of parchment with a bright, opaque white ground (which lends the work a noticeable brilliance). Using a very fine brush, he then painted in most of the design with a brown wash, describing minute details such as the hairs in the horse's mane, the decorative buckles in its harness, or the precise hatching that conveys soft tonal transitions. The painstaking and assured penwork was then added on top of these two layers.

The style, subject, and manner of hatching immediately reminded me of the prints of the Florentine artist Antonio Tempesta (1555–1630). A prolific painter and printmaker, Tempesta is mostly known today for his series of etchings depicting crowded battles, dramatic hunt scenes involving wild and exotic animals, and equestrian portraits of kings past and present. What unites his vast oeuvre is the ubiquitous presence of horses. Tempesta had a passion and a special talent for drawing the horse in a variety of dynamic poses. Indeed, the size and influence of his body of work was such that other artists, as late as the nineteenth century, based their horses on Tempesta's prints rather than on live animals, particularly when they had to depict them rearing on their hind legs.[1]

Given the similarity between the disciplined penwork in our drawing and the dense crosshatching of a print, I imagined the sheet could be a careful copy of one of Tempesta's etchings, but this exact design does not appear in any of the published catalogues of Tempesta's printed work. That systematic overview, however, revealed that the museum's Saint George is an accomplished assemblage of compositional elements that appear in a number of Tempesta's drawings and prints, albeit never in this exact combination. The horse's posture, for instance, is one of Tempesta's favorites: he used an almost identical example in his famous portrait of King Henry IV of France [Fig. 2]. Tempesta also treated the subject of the slaying of the dragon in a small etching [Fig. 3] as part of a series illustrating the history of the Order of Saint George.[2] The print's composition

Antonius Tempesta Inuentor et fecit
Anno Iubilei 1600.

is broadly comparable to our drawing, but many of the details are too different for it to have served as its model. A pen and wash drawing by Tempesta that recently appeared at auction [Fig. 4], on the other hand, is much closer to the RISD composition: the sinuous curves of the dragon's tail at right, the orientation of the horse's head, the fluttering bridle, and the head of the dragon are all very close matches. But the Christie's drawing depicts an earlier moment in the legendary confrontation, with George about to pierce the dragon with his spear, fragments of which stick out of the creature's body in our sheet.[3] As for the saint, the same skillfully foreshortened head protected by an extravagantly plumed helmet is found on the right side of an etching by the artist showing the mythological battle between the Greeks and the Amazons [Fig. 5]. This kind of compositional reuse is typical of Tempesta's prolific output.

Having come this far in my search, I had to contend with the information I did not have and perhaps could never recover. The first thing we don't know is how the drawing got to the RISD Museum. The sheet is an example of a "found in collection" object, a category used in many older museums to describe objects found in storage that were never formally accessioned into the collection. With no number attached to it, no obvious paper trail, and no further leads, we can only assume that the work arrived at the museum before professional registrars began managing the collection in the 1950s. Even with sustained archival research we may never find out how Saint George came to Providence, which is particularly lamentable because provenance can help answer one of the most basic questions we ask about any object: *who made it?*

While some clues suggest an attribution to Tempesta, this drawing's unusual medium and technique should give us pause. The fact that the composition brings together elements from disparate sources in Tempesta's oeuvre—some of which were never published in print—provides a strong argument that only Tempesta could have pulled them together to design this image. A potential objection could be that the majority of Tempesta's drawings are executed in a different, looser style, with flowing, cursive pen outlines paired with freely handled wash. Some examples, however, such as a highly finished drawing of a hunting scene at Windsor [Fig. 6], demonstrate that Tempesta was indeed capable of handling the pen with the same discipline and control evident in

FIG. 5 (previous page)
Antonio Tempesta
Battle Between the Greeks and Amazons (detail), 1600
Etching and engraving
Sheet: 30.4 × 40 cm. (11 15/16 × 15 ¾ in.)
Philadelphia Museum of Art, The Muriel and Philip Berman Gift, acquired from the John S. Phillips bequest of 1876 to the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, with funds contributed by Muriel and Philip Berman, gifts (by exchange) of Lisa Norris Elkins, Bryant W. Langston, Samuel S. White 3rd and Vera White, with additional funds contributed by John Howard McFadden, Jr., Thomas Skelton Harrison, and the Philip H. and A.S.W. Rosenbach Foundation, 1985-52-32684

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his etchings. Intriguingly, a drawing that recently reappeared on the private market, a large finished work in pen and ink and wash on prepared paper with extensive gold highlights, suggests not only that Tempesta made independent, sizeable, highly wrought drawings, but that he was also open to experimenting with unusual techniques.[4] That battle scene may correspond to one of "two chiaroscuro drawings on yellow paper with a black frame" listed in the inventory of the prestigious collection of Cardinal Scipione Borghese between 1615 and 1630.[5] The RISD drawing, with its experimental technique, its thick dark frame, and its chiaroscuro or grisaille effect may well be a similar work that Tempesta carried out for an elite patron; the use of parchment, made from animal skin and much more expensive than paper, would indeed suggest an important commission. In the absence of further parallels, though, we cannot be certain, nor can we exclude the hypothesis that Saint George is a virtuosic homage to Tempesta executed by a later follower who knew and admired his prints and drawings. For now, the attribution is still followed by a question mark.

As previously mentioned, Saint George suffered considerable damage at some point in its long history. Losses are particularly evident

FIG. 6
Antonio Tempesta
A Boar Hunt
Pen and ink
40.8 × 65.2 cm. (16 1/16 × 25 11/16 in.)
Royal Collection Trust /
© Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2019

in the lower right quadrant of the sheet, where entire areas of ink have almost completely flaked off. The extent and character of this damage may have something to do with the unusual technique and materials the artist employed. In addition to the natural buckling of the parchment, the surface appears to have been physically rubbed and abraded [Fig. 7]. The sheet was also unceremoniously punctured numerous times in the corners and in the middle of its four margins, with little consideration for the drawn surface. The closely spaced double holes resemble the marks that would be left by coarse staples, and green oxidation stains around some of them appear to indicate their prolonged contact with metal. What sort of handling could have inflicted such harm? Are these marks the signs that the drawing was at one point mounted on a wooden panel or frame? If so, why damage the image so carelessly with nails? Or was this sheet of parchment repurposed, perhaps as a book cover, folded and stapled to a board by a bookbinder? This treatment may account for the extensively rubbed surface, but again, we will probably never know what exactly happened to the work. The number of nail holes, though, indicates that it may have been affixed and remounted more than once.

Larger, more intractable questions I have not been able to dismiss during my research include *when and why did this lovingly executed drawing cease to be considered precious or valuable? When was this refined work of art demoted to little more than a curiosity, to the extent that its traces could be lost, that its whereabouts and movements could go unrecorded? Why did insouciance creep in?* These considerations move us away from the physical characteristics and peculiar history of the RISD Museum drawing to broader considerations about the dicey survival of art, the sometimes irretrievable loss of knowledge, and the occasional indifference our predecessors showed to objects we now treasure. As someone whose job and passion is to care for, study, and protect past examples of human ingenuity and creativity, I will never be entirely at ease with these realizations. In the end, the valiant Saint George won his own battle against oblivion, even though he did not emerge unscathed. Perhaps what his ghostly, time-worn (re)appearance can teach us is that while some stories will get lost, it is always worth fighting to preserve them and bring them back to light.

FIG. 7
After, or possibly by, Antonio Tempesta
Italian, 1555–1630
Saint George and the Dragon (detail), 1600–1700
Ink and gouache on vellum
44.5 × 36.5 cm. (17 ½ × 14 ⅜ in.)
Museum collection INV2006.205.18

7

1 Eckhard Leuschner, *Antonio Tempesta: ein Bahnbrecher des römischen Barock und seine europäische Wirkung* (Petersberg: Michael Imhoff, 2005), 531–32.

2 *Isagogica historia de Constautino…*; Bartsch XVII.183.1428–1442.

3 Two further drawings by Tempesta at the Louvre (Inv 1831, recto, and Inv 1837, recto) show two further variants of this subject, both of them with the dragon lying on the ground with head upturned. See http://arts-graphiques.louvre.fr/.

4 Leuschner, *Antonio Tempesta*, 489, fig. 14.19. The drawing, a battle scene, auctioned at Sotheby's in 1991 (New York, Sotheby's, January 8, 1991, lot 108) was most recently sold by Stephen Ongpin to a private collector.

5 Leuschner, *Antonio Tempesta*, 490 and 603.

JANUARY 1951

laguna

Institutionalizing Memories

The Peter J. Cohen Snapshot Collection by Allison Pappas

Snapshots and other everyday photographs reflect the desire for photographs that portray loved ones well, or mark events and special memories. With time, however, personal connections can fade—or perhaps become accidentally severed—as snapshots are passed on to distant relatives, misplaced, and relegated to the secondhand market.

Over the last few decades, snapshots have been collected and exhibited with serious interest. These images, celebrated for their fresh, "real" insights into specific times and places, offer what can be critical historical information, revealing choices people made about fashion, behavior, and activities, as well as other social conditions and conventions. However, the act of bringing snapshots into a museum context divorces them from their original use and personal value as private objects—objects that were circulated and cherished.

Collector Peter J. Cohen has scoured flea markets, garage sales, and shops for years, amassing a collection of about 50,000 snapshots, organized around distinctive categories including At Play, Kids, Picnics, Photographer's Shadows, and Women Organized Neatly. He now donates his snapshots to museums around the country, inviting curators to make selections. In 2015 and 2018, three RISD Museum curators, along with RISD faculty and student colleagues, chose more than 250 images from Cohen's collection to support specific exhibitions and general collection and teaching priorities.

Curators frequently acquire snapshots that depict people whose identities or statuses are underrepresented in museum collections—critical both for presenting a more diverse range of communities within institutional narratives and for correcting the biases of normative fine-art practices through the self-representation of a popular visual culture. But photographs that are frankly curious or bizarre, with quirky content or an interesting aesthetic, are also appealing even if they do not shed light on the what, where, when, or why of their subjects.

Snapshots encourage viewers to recontextualize them, to imagine their hidden histories and meanings, ensuring their enduring allure. They also raise questions. What stories are restored when snapshots become part of museum collections? What stories are lost with the anonymity of the photographers and subjects to whom they once belonged? How will snapshots taken today be interpreted in the future? Will they end up in collections, or will they simply be deleted with the swipe of a finger?

Origin:	American	Dimensions:	10.2 x 6.7 cm. (4 x 2 5/8 in.)
Artist:	Unknown	Acquisition:	Gift of Peter J. Cohen in honor of Luke Cohen, RISD BFA 1971, BArch 1972, Architecture
Object:	Untitled, January 1951		
Materials:	Gelatin silver print		

AL WILLIAMS HEALTH CLUB S.

53

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1

Arranging Furniture and Shaping Taste in Turn-of-the-Century Providence

Suzanne M. Scanlan

A pair of elegant mahogany urns [Fig. 1] punctuates a Hepplewhite-style sideboard. Displayed in Pendleton House, the RISD Museum's gallery of furniture and decorative objects, these works were once housed in the dining room of Providence antiquarian and collector Charles Pendleton.[1]

The utilitarian function of the urns, which date to the late eighteenth century, is not readily apparent beyond complementing the stylized Neoclassicism and decorative refinement of the sideboard. In fact, they are knife boxes, handsome containers for cutlery and utensils, which served as both a practical means of storage and as a convenient reserve for servants setting out dinnerware in "a gentleman's household."[2] The RISD Museum accessioned the pair in 1904, as part of Pendleton's bequest of his vast collection of European and American furniture.[3]

Two decades later, miniature versions of the urns [Fig. 2] were meticulously recreated in mahogany, maple, and faux-marble finishes by Marion Isobel Perkins (1872–1947), a 1914 graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design and

FIG. 1
English
Urn-Shape Knife Box, ca. 1770–1790
Pine with mahogany veneer
Height: 66 cm. (26 in.)
Bequest of Mr. Charles L. Pendleton 04.061

2

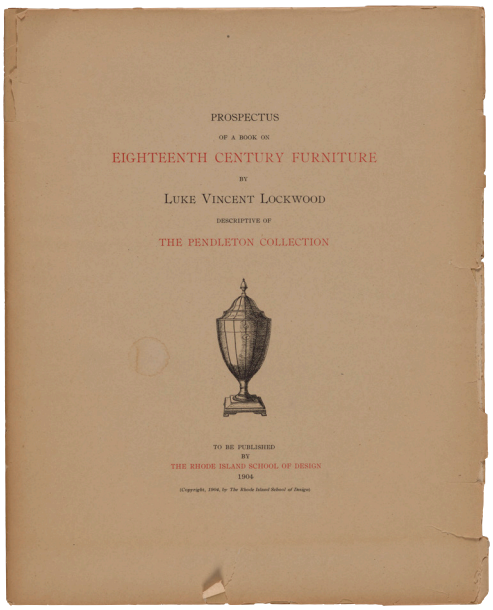

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FIG. 2
Toy Furniture Company
Knife Boxes, ca. 1930
Faux marble finish
Photo courtesy of Linda Edward

FIG. 3
Title page for *Prospectus of a Book on Eighteenth-Century Furniture by Luke Vincent Lockwood, Descriptive of the Pendleton Collection*, 1904

co-founder of the Toy Furniture Company.[4] In collaboration with Providence business and design partners, Perkins manufactured a line of scale reproductions of vernacular architecture and furnishings called Tynietoy, much of which was based on the Pendleton collection. The histories and memories associated with the making and display of the knife boxes in various contexts—macro and micro—allow us to connect patrons, collectors, teachers, students, designers, and manufacturers with links to RISD and its museum. Further, they reflect deep and fluid associations between clubs and cultural institutions in Providence during the early decades of the twentieth century.

In the late 1800s, Rhode Island lawyer Charles Leonard Pendleton (1846–1904) came to prominence as a collector and dealer of American and English antique furniture and decorative arts. He developed an international correspondence with antiquarians and connoisseurs and ultimately culled his holdings of American colonial works with an eye toward bequeathing them to the RISD Museum. When Pendleton died in 1904—and in accordance with the strict stipulations of his will—the museum hired the Providence architectural firm Stone, Carpenter & Wilson to design a wing reflecting venerable local dwellings such as Pendleton's 1799 Georgian-style home at 72 Waterman Street and the 1826 Truman Beckwith House at 42 College Street. Pendleton House, as the wing is known today, was constructed in brick and completed in 1906.[5]

Luke Vincent Lockwood, a prominent antiquarian and friend of Charles Pendleton, produced a limited-edition catalogue of the Pendleton collection, the first major

publication the museum undertook.[6] Lockwood featured a rendering of the Pendleton knife box on the title page of his prospectus for the catalogue [Fig. 3], which was initially proposed as a "Book on Eighteenth Century Furniture."[7] The finished volumes were bound in embossed, tooled leather and generously illustrated with photographs of the furnishings as displayed in Pendleton's home, serving as a kind of dress rehearsal for the installation of the Pendleton collection in the RISD Museum galleries.[8] Lockwood described the design, proper disposition, and function of the Pendleton knife boxes:

> KNIFE BOXES in Hepplewhite style, such as the one illustrated, were intended to be placed at either end of the sideboard. They are excellent examples of cabinet making. Each section is slightly inlaid, and there are four bands of inlay on the base, two on the feet, and two on each break of the surface of the curve, all in the same simple design. It will be seen that the top is supported by a center rod which, when raised, releases a spring which holds up the top. Inside are variously shaped openings to accommodate knives and often forks and spoons as well. The urn-shaped pattern for boxes was used by [Robert] Adam and [Thomas] Sheraton as well as by Hepplewhite, but this particular shape is usually attributed to Hepplewhite.

Here, the Pendleton knife box is depicted in its open state [Fig. 4], with the box cover staged as a majestic baldachin set over a group of haphazardly disposed knife handles, appearing as though they had been hastily returned to their container after a memorable, if protracted, dinner party.[9]

Appropriate and accurate display of the Pendleton collection was of primary concern to Eliza Greene Metcalf Radeke (1854–1931), who became president of RISD in 1913 and made the museum her life's work. Radeke was instrumental in realizing the Pendleton bequest for the museum, and she spent much of her career expanding the museum's collection of furniture and decorative arts. She made a serious commitment to broadening the scope of American furniture for the galleries, imagining a series of period rooms to complement the Pendleton donation.[10] The presentation of period rooms at world's fairs, expositions, and ultimately in museum settings was a growing international phenomenon, beginning in Europe in the nineteenth century and coming to American museums in the first decades of the twentieth century. In Providence, the RISD Museum's installation of the Pendleton collection signaled a turn from the display of Colonial furniture in relation to the ancestry of its prior

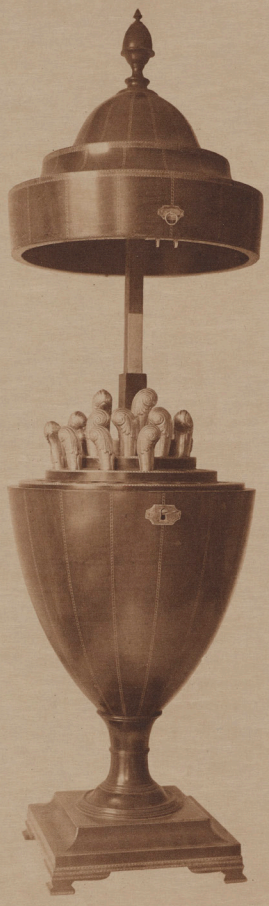


FIG. 4
Photogravure of Hepplewhite-style knife box in *The Pendleton Collection*, Rhode Island School of Design, 1904

FIG. 5
Tintype of Marion Perkins from a miniature volume entitled *Miss Abbott's School Alumni Association*, 1916. Photo courtesy of Alice and Harry Beckwith

5

owners, instead grouping and arranging objects to feature design, craftsmanship, and aesthetic appeal.[11] Pendleton House, the first museum wing to focus on American furniture and decorative arts, served as a model for gallery design during this period.

At some point, Eliza Radeke and Marion Perkins crossed paths. A daughter from one of the prominent families in Providence, Perkins [Fig. 5] attended Miss Abbott's School for girls and studied art for a year in Paris with the progressive educator Mary C. Wheeler. She attended courses in interior architecture at the Rhode Island School of Design intermittently between 1891 and 1914, working during that time as an interior decorator.

Radeke and Perkins were both members of the nascent Providence Handicraft Club, founded in 1904—the same year as the Pendleton bequest—to provide studio facilities and large-scale equipment such as looms for female artisans. In 1907, the Handicraft Club settled into what would become its permanent quarters at the Truman Beckwith House, just around the corner from Pendleton House and the museum. The club secretary's report from February 5, 1907, records Julia Lippitt Mauran proposing Mrs. Gustav Radeke for membership in the Handicraft Club. At the same meeting, Marion Perkins was offered a club position known as the Gladding Membership.[12] Was it here that the two discovered their common interest in colonial furniture and interior design?

During this time, Marion Perkins's interior-decoration business was flagging and the American toy industry was booming.[13] Perkins began to craft miniature furniture of a quality that had been traditionally imported from Europe. Beginning with a small rush-seat ladder-back chair that would feature in the company's logo, she worked in a muddy barn on the Handicraft Club premises, spurred on by a fellow member, Amey Vernon. Enthusiastic purchases of furniture and dollhouses by Handicraft Club members, particularly after the club's move to College Street, prompted Vernon (as backer) and Perkins (as artist and designer) to found the Toy Furniture Shop in 1910. The pair collaborated with noted artist and

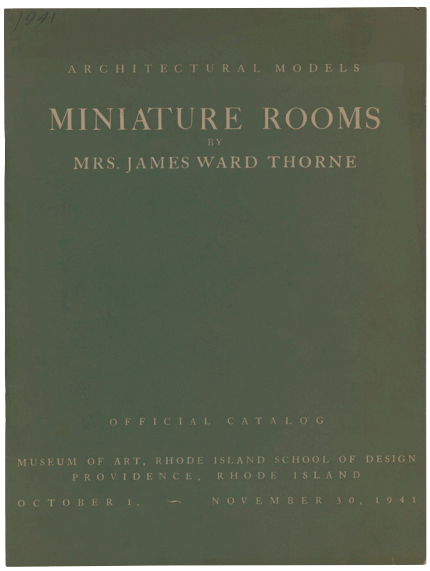
Providence Art Club founder Sydney Richmond Burleigh to design their furniture to a standardized scale of one inch to one foot. Much of Tynietoy's initial line—and most popular pieces—replicated period furniture and decorative accessories, including hand-loomed rugs and painted panoramic wallpaper. A 1925 *Providence Journal* article included a photograph of the Toy Furniture Shop in the Handicraft Club barn and described "miniature colonial furniture [that was] copied from the rare pieces in Pendleton House."[14]

In its first decade in business, the Toy Furniture Shop expanded and relocated to four different locations in downtown Providence, finally settling at 33 Eddy Street. Tynietoy marketed by catalogue and shipped worldwide, also selling Perkins's dollhouses and accessories at prominent department stores including FAO Schwarz in Boston and New York, Macy's in New York, Montgomery Ward in Chicago, and Halle Brothers in Cleveland. By 1930, the Toy Furniture Shop employed more than fifty artists, many of whom were men trained as woodworkers, turners, and joiners as part of a rehabilitation program for World War I veterans, supported by RISD. Women were employed to hand-paint Tynietoy furniture, often according to their own designs. Eliza Radeke was a staunch supporter of the rehabilitation program and noted her pride in RISD's commitment to it in several of her commencement speeches.[15]

The company made custom dollhouses for private patrons including Abby Aldrich (Mrs. John D.) Rockefeller, who, along with her sister, Lucy Aldrich, bequeathed important collections of Asian textiles, fine porcelain, and Japanese prints to the RISD Museum. Linda Edward, a Newport collector, historian of dolls and miniatures, and member of the Tynietoy Preservation Society, reviewed the Society's interviews conducted in the 1980s with former employees of the Toy Furniture Shop. According to Mr. Okolowicz, an accountant who kept the books for Tynietoy, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller paid his salary and contributed to rent payments for the Toy Furniture Company.[16]

It is possible that the Toy Furniture Company had a hand in inspiring Chicago artist Narcissa Niblack Thorne to construct her now famous miniature rooms between 1932 and 1940.[17] Each of the Thorne creations offers the viewer a glimpse into a meticulously crafted period room, ranging from European interiors from the thirteenth through twentieth centuries to American furnishings from the colonial era through the 1930s. Eliza Radeke's grandniece, the architectural historian and interior designer Pauline Metcalf, remembers being lifted up by a family member so that she could look into the Thorne rooms when they were exhibited at the RISD Museum in 1941 [Fig. 6].[18] Metcalf's recollection of the

FIG. 6
Cover of the exhibition catalogue *Miniature Rooms—European Series—by Mrs. James Ward Thorne*, Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, 1941. RISD Archives



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experience and the impression it made on her bespeaks a young child's delight in the face of the familiar features of a home rendered in a miniature scale. It also points to dollhouses and miniature furnishings as models for shaping taste and as a mode for educating young girls in the arrangement and maintenance of domestic space.

The popularity of Tynietoy's commercially marketed period dollhouses in the 1920s and 30s must be considered in response to the late nineteenth-century proliferation of domestic guides for middle- to upper-class American women, along with the advent of home-economics courses in public schools in New England.[19] Recollections by Tynietoy customers point to a complex social history of dollhouses which, by this time, were not made solely for aesthetic delight and adult edification nor simply as toys for child's play.

In a 1981 interview, two sisters who grew up in New York City—Natalie Wiggins and Mary Jarvis—remembered receiving Tynietoy dollhouses for Christmas in 1935. With help from their mother, they sewed curtains, hooked rugs, and crafted quilts to complement the furniture they ordered from Tynietoy catalogues and purchased during special trips to FAO Schwarz. Each year for forty years, Natalie washed, ironed, and rehung her miniature curtains, following annual rituals established by her mother for the family home. Both sisters attributed their eye for period furniture and taste for decorating with antiques to poring over the arrangements of colonial furniture in miniature rooms photographed for Tynietoy catalogues.[20] Indeed, Marion Perkins and Amey Vernon underscored the authenticity, authority, and educational value of their products on the introductory page of their 1930 catalogue, stating:

> Tynietoy's authentic reproductions of Hepplewhite, Sheraton, Chippendale and other early American-designed furniture have spread their fame far beyond New England. Every piece will stand the criticism of the connoisseur and all have the endorsement of the leading Arts and Crafts Societies of the country.

7

920 CHIPPENDALE DINING ROOM—17 pieces **20.50**

Chair seats—Green, black, red or blue.
2 No. 301 Corner Cupboards, No. 431 Swell Front Sideboard, No. 503 Drop Leaf Table, 3 No. 210 Chairs—Straight, 1 No. 211 Chair—Arm, No. 1702 Handwoven Rug, No. 508 Side Table, 2 No. 1160 Knife Boxes, No. 1154 Dinner Set, No. 1165 Tea Set, No. 1100 Banjo Clock, No. 1168 Tray with Bottle and Glasses, No. 1159 Jardiniere.

8

> TYNIETOYS are the ORIGINAL miniature antique furniture, appealing to grown-ups as well as children. Their design, construction and finish are the result of extensive research backed by the best authorities.[21]

Charles Pendleton's knife boxes, as components of his substantial bequest to the RISD Museum, represent an endeavor to champion American connoisseurship and suitable display in the home as the foundation for genteel living. The Tynietoy versions of the same gave homemakers (in reality and "in training") an opportunity to showcase their good taste in the domestic realm; dollhouses and miniature furniture were used for both educational play and as objects for aesthetic appreciation. Tynietoy replicas of furniture from the Pendleton collection were arranged in Toy Furniture Company catalogues to reflect the display of the original furnishings in the RISD Museum's galleries. If we compare photographs of the Pendleton dining room from Lockwood's catalogue and the colonial dining room as offered by Tynietoy, we see a direct correspondence between the full-scale dwelling and the miniature mansion conceived at the Handicraft Club [Figs. 7 and 8]. We trace a lineage from Pendleton and Lockwood to Radeke and Perkins to girls like Natalie Wiggins and Mary Jarvis, articulated through their shared commitment to the study, presentation, and preservation of antique furnishings, and punctuated by the narrowing gap between public display and the private domain.

FIG. 7
Interior view, dining room in *The Pendleton Collection*, Rhode Island School of Design, 1904

FIG. 8
Tynietoy Chippendale dining room, Providence, Rhode Island, ca. 1930. Courtesy of the Rhode Island Historical Society

1 My heartfelt thanks to Alice and Harry Beckwith, Linda Edward, Andy Martinez, and Pauline Metcalf for their generosity and shared expertise.

2 George Hepplewhite, *The Cabinet-Maker and Upholsterer's Guide; or, Repository of Designs for Every Article of Household Furniture, in the Newest and Most Approved Taste,* 3rd ed. (London: B. T. Batsford, 1897), https://archive.org/details/cabinetmakerupho00ahepuoft/page/n5.

3 RISD Museum accession records, 1904. The knife boxes were accessioned as numbers 04.061 and 04.062. Described as made by Hepplewhite (later catalogued as in the "Hepplewhite Style"), they measure 26 1/2 inches tall and are 7 1/2 by 7 5/8 inches at their base.

4 The 1930 Tynietoy catalogue lists a pair of knife boxes containing miniature knives and forks for $1.50.

5 Christopher P. Monkhouse and Thomas S. Michie, *American Furniture in Pendleton House* (Providence: Museum of the Rhode Island School of Design, 1986), 9–39. The Truman Beckwith House became the permanent quarters of the Handicraft Club in 1907, one year after Pendleton House was built.

6 Luke Vincent Lockwood, *The Pendleton Collection* (Providence: Rhode Island School of Design, 1904).

7 *Prospectus of a Book on Eighteenth-Century Furniture by Luke Vincent Lockwood, Descriptive of the Pendleton Collection, to be published by the Rhode Island School of Design, 1904,* Decorative Arts Department files, RISD Museum.

8 Monkhouse and Michie, *American Furniture in Pendleton House,* 37.

9 Lockwood, *The Pendleton Collection,* 203–5.

10 Monkhouse and Michie, *American Furniture in Pendleton House,* 39–46.

11 Ibid., 31.

12 Handicraft Club Archives, Box 1, Record Book 1906–14, 23, Rhode Island Historical Society.

13 Woody Register, "The Sentimental Work of Play: Manhood and the American Toy Industry, 1900–1930," in *Cultures of Commerce: Representation and American Business Culture, 1877–1960,* ed. Elspeth H. Brown, Catherine Gudis, and Marina Moskowitz (Basingstroke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 177.

14 "Handicraft Club Occupies New Home on Hill," *Providence Sunday Journal,* October 4, 1925, 2.

15 Office of the President Files, Eliza G. Radeke, 1913–31, Box 4, Folder 35, RISD Archives.

16 Linda Edward, "Tynietoy and the Toy Furniture Shop," *Antique Doll Collector* 8, no. 3 (April 2005), 43–48. The Tynietoy Preservation Society was founded by Herbert H. Hosmer of South Lancaster, Massachusetts. Hosmer contacted Marion Perkins and Amey Vernon as a young collector and corresponded with them until their deaths, after which he founded the preservation society. Tynietoy folded within five years of Marion Perkins's death in 1947.

17 An article in the January 1939 issue of *Yankee Magazine* credits Frank Battistini, a woodworker in the Toy Furniture Shop, with inspiring Thorne to create miniatures during her tour of the shop in Providence in the 1920s. According to one source, brass andirons and candlesticks sold by Tynietoy are displayed in Thorne rooms. See Susan Milmore, "Rare and Unusual Tynietoy Accessories," *Antique Doll Collector* 18, no. 8 (September 2015), 34. See also Edward, "Tynietoy and the Toy Furniture Company," 47.

18 RISD Museum Files, RISD Special Collections, RISD Archives.

19 From Catharine Beecher's seminal treatise to Elsie deWolfe's volume on interior decorating, the literature is vast. See Catharine E. Beecher, *A Treatise on Domestic Economy: For the Use of Young Ladies at Home and at School* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1842); Catharine E. Beecher, *The American Woman's Home* (New York: J. B. Ford & Co., 1869); Kathryn Kish Sklar, *Catharine Beecher: A Study in American Domesticity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973); Elsie de Wolfe, *The House in Good Taste* (New York: Century Co., 1913).

20 Dee Snyder, "A Tale of Two Doll Houses," *Nutshell News,* August 1981, 46-49.

21 Emphasis as printed in the Tynietoy catalogue published in 1930. NK 4893. T69.T96, Rhode Island Historical Society. Perkins and Vernon also offered enlarged photographs of Tynietoy period rooms for buyers who wished to study more detailed views.

As Far As We Can Go

Nick White

J.S. 93

John Singer Sargent
American, 1856–1925
Two Nude Male Figures,
between 1916 and 1925
Graphite on paper
25.4 × 36.2 cm. (10 × 14 5/16 in.)
Gift of Emily Sargent and
Mrs. Francis Ormond 31.016

After he left them, they borrowed a friend's 1960 Chevy Corvette and drove to Memphis for a night. Had the car been cherry red, one remarked to the other, it might have been too loud and cheerful to be endured. But the car was silver, a few shades lighter than the sky overhead, which seemed just about perfect, they both agreed. From Jackson, they hit the Natchez Trace Parkway, riding with the top down, despite the forecasts for rain, not caring that it would take them longer to get there this way. It was pouring by the time they entered the city. And yet they never mentioned putting the top back up. They enjoyed the sensation of being thoroughly washed, licked clean.

Do you remember that movie star who shot the hole in the floor of her car because it had filled up with rainwater? one yelled to the other as the rain pummeled them. What's her name?

No, the other didn't know her name, thinking that was something one should mention later to him, who might, but then remembered he wasn't coming back.

They pulled into the garage attached to a fancy hotel near Beale Street where they didn't have reservations but were hopeful all the same. At the front desk the clerk asked them if they had fallen into the river, then laughed, even when they made it clear by their expressions they didn't think it was very funny.

There's only a few rooms left, the clerk told them, frowning now. A convention was in town, something for magicians.

Magic, one said. What kind?

Sleight of hand, the clerk said, still frowning. Illusions. What else?

I once saw a woman get sawed in half, the other offered.

No kidding, one said to the other, turning. When was that?

But they were interrupted by the clerk who told them the rate of a room, an amount that galled them into pretending like it was no big deal.

We'll take it, one said.

Can somebody help with our bags? the other asked, looking around the gleaming entranceway, but there was no one available right then.

Inside the hotel room, they took off their wet clothes and draped them over the shower rod in the bathroom. The room had two queen beds, and each of them sat down on a separate mattress, one facing the other, their nakedness on full display. They had been together for years before he came along. Without him now, they didn't know what to do with themselves, where to put their hands, how to move their bodies. His particular absence stood between them.

Should we get dinner? one asked.

The other confessed to being afraid.

Of what? one wanted to know.

The other couldn't say for sure, and said instead, I saw the woman get sawed in half in Tunica, at one of the casinos, with him.

I know, one said. I was there. I just forgot that you were there too.

The following morning, they checked out early. Both had jobs to return to the next day. The car's still-damp leather seats smelled like the inside of a shoe. They decided to drive east for a while, air out the car, and soon they found their way back onto the Natchez Trace again. Only they didn't head back home but the other way, toward Nashville, to where the Trace ended, or became something else, they didn't know what, but would find out when they got there.

In our efforts to preserve monuments of the past and to present them in an appealing manner to modern museum goers, we often give the illusion of wholeness to things that are actually fractured and isolated. As much a construct of twentieth-century archaeological practices as it is of Babylonian architects, the RISD Museum's striding lion offers an opportunity to explore this idea.

About 2,500 years ago, a lion like this was but one of hundreds positioned along the walls of a stone-paved road that ran through the city of Babylon. The

How To

(Re)Construct the Striding Lions of Babylon by Shiyanthi Thavapalan

Processional Way, as it was called, was about a half a mile long and sheltered by a wall that was fifteen meters tall on either side. It led from the king's summer palace to the Ishtar Gate, one of the eight magnificent entrances to the inner city. Fearsome dragon-like creatures (called *mušhuššu* in ancient times) and bulls fashioned in glazed brickwork alternated on the Ishtar Gate. Blue bricks the color of lapis lazuli formed the brilliant background for both road and gateway. On the day of the new year's festival, statues of the city gods were carried along this road to the main temple, accompanied by the king and his people.

After the city was abandoned in the early Islamic period, the lions disappeared under the sand and remained more or less untouched (except by brick robbers) for centuries, until they aroused the curiosity of European travelers and eventually archaeologists. Excavations began in March 1899 under the direction of the German archaeologist Robert Koldewey. Bit by bit, Babylon was unearthed and transported to Berlin. Once there, the colorful fragments were cleaned, touched up with paint, coated with paraffin, and reassembled one brick at a time. By 1930, a monumental reconstruction of the Processional Way and the Ishtar Gate was created inside the Pergamon Museum (today the Vorderasiatisches Museum). Certain modifications had to be made to fit the remains of an ancient city into a modern building—only the smaller, frontal part of the original double gateway was assembled, and the bronze and cedar roof and door were not rebuilt. The RISD Museum acquired its panel with striding lion from the Pergamon Museum in 1934, a time when a fair number of lions and a few of the dragons and bulls were sold to museums around the world.

Design and Construction: Step by Step

Neo-Babylonian
Panel with Striding Lion,
604–562 BCE
Glazed brick
104.1 × 228.6 cm. (41 × 90 in.)
Museum Appropriation Fund
34.652

As we have no ancient descriptions of how these glazed brickwork friezes were constructed, our technical knowledge about this lion and the larger structure it belonged to is based on a combination of evidence. Observations made by the archaeologists at the time of excavation and by conservators who have had the chance to study the individual bricks, scientific analysis, and some guesswork together tell the story of how the Processional Way was built.

First, the individual bricks were made using a combination of mud, straw (which helped harden the final product), and very likely sand and lime. This mixture was then placed into molds and cut into their characteristic slightly wedged shapes. Applying the decorative motifs that appear in high relief in a uniform manner required some ingenuity. For this, a template of the lion's body must have been created, from which a mold could be formed. Once dry, this could be cut to make individual molds for the face of each brick that made up the lion. As many molds as necessary could be produced to speed up the brick-making process.

Once the molded and plain-faced bricks had been fired in the kiln, they were laid out so that the decorations could be painted in glaze. Opaque blue, yellow,

white, and perhaps red glazes were applied smoothly to create a glassy effect, although the colors have altered due to moisture and time. Small pits and pinholes where gases escaped are visible today on the surface of the glaze; in other areas, moisture has caused the glaze to swell and flake off entirely.

The black contour lines that single out details on the lion's body must have been drawn first, since the colors have flowed over and obscured them in some places. Traces of the red paint employed for the underdrawing are just visible where the glaze has worn off [Fig. 1].

FIG. 1

During the coloring process, fitter's marks in the form of numerals and dots were placed on the upper edge of each brick with glaze that now appears blackish. Signs designating the vertical position of the brick within the course appear in the center; the horizontal position was marked by signs placed along the vertical joint of the brick, so that they appear adjacent to each other [Fig. 2].

At this point, the bricks were ready to be fired again to achieve the lustrous glazed effect. They were then transported to the building site and reassembled with the aid of the fitter's marks.

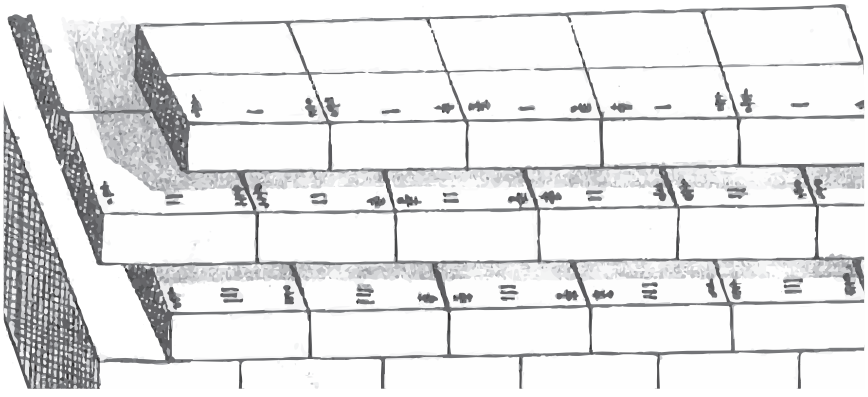

FIG. 2

A Closer Look: How Many Lions Make Up a Lion?

When archaeologists in Berlin were tasked with reassembling the Processional Way in the early twentieth century, they began by grouping the thousands of bricks by motif—snarling mouth, mane, tail, paw, etc.—regardless of where they were originally found. Each animal was then put together again with the aid of the fitter's marks, much like a Lego construction. New pieces were cast to replace missing ones. In other words, the lion you see before you today is a composite that never actually existed in this exact form in Babylon! A telltale sign is seen in the background, where bricks whose color has disintegrated to a turquoise have been placed adjacent to better-preserved dark blue ones [Fig. 3]. Originally, these bricks belonged to different parts of the wall.

FIG. 3

A Matter of Cost

Mesopotamians began firing bricks in wood-fueled kilns starting around 2500 BCE. While this technology ensured the strength and durability of monumental buildings, it also vastly increased the cost of production. Fired bricks cost two to five times more than sunbaked bricks at the time this lion frieze was made. Bricks destined for glazing were even more expensive, as they had to be fired up to three times before the decorations could be applied. Evidently no expense was spared for the construction of Nebuchadnezzar II's splendid city, which was once considered one of the wonders of the world.

FIGS. 1 & 3
Neo-Babylonian
Panel with Striding Lion (detail), 604–562 BCE
Glazed brick
104.1 × 228.6 cm. (41 × 90 in.)
Museum Appropriation Fund
34.652

FIG. 2
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"MISSOURI · C" 7/25

CHARLES WHITE '72

Portfolio / Artist on Art

(1)
Roman-Egyptian
Bust of a Child, late 200s BCE
Bronze
12.7 × 10 × 4.9 cm. (5 × 3 15/16 × 1 15/16 in.)
Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 11.035

(2)
Attributed to James Martin
English, 1778–1853
Portrait of A Gentleman, ca. 1820
Pastel on paper
54.5 × 42.6 cm. (21 7/16 × 16 3/4 in.)
Georgiana Sayles Aldrich Fund 2000.81

(3)
Charles-Henri-Joseph Cordier
French, 1827–1905
African Venus, 1851
Bronze with silver and gold patination
51.1 x 21.6 x 16.5 cm. (20 1/8 x 8 1/2 x 6 1/2 in.)
Jesse Metcalf Fund 1995.013

(4)
Egyptian
Head of a Man, 2289–2246 BCE
Wood
Height: 50.8 cm. (20 in.)
Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 25.031

(previous pages)
Charles White
American, 1918–1979
Missouri C., 1972
Etching on cream paper
Plate: 49.8 × 91.4 cm. (19 5/8 × 36 in.)
Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 2016.105
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